TRAINING SYSTEM REVIEW

Final Report of the 2005 Training System Review Panel

A New Training Model for Saskatchewan

November 2005

Saskatchewan Learning
Published in November, 2005

ISBN: 1-894743-99-7

106-02033/

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

The Honourable Andrew Thomson
Minister of Learning

Dear Minister Thomson:

The Training System Review Panel is pleased to present its report and recommendations to you.

Saskatchewan's training system is essential to the province's social and economic development in the twenty-first century. Saskatchewan residents must have the skills employers require to operate competitively in the global economy. It is critical that the components of the public training system, including the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), the Regional Colleges, the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC), the Aboriginal institutions and Saskatchewan Learning and its agencies, all perform within a seamless system. Based on best practices and analysis of current research we are proposing a New Training Model. The New Training Model provides the framework for an effective and innovative system which will ensure Saskatchewan is well-positioned to meet the significant challenges and opportunities for the province.

Our recommendations are based on the wealth of information and data we garnered through our research and through conversations with interested parties and people, including the receipt of briefs and submissions. Many weeks were devoted to listening and talking as we learned from those knowledgeable about and interested in the training system.

We thank you for the opportunity to work on this important matter. We are pleased to present for your consideration the Final Report of the 2005 Training System Review Panel - A New Training Model for Saskatchewan.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug McArthur, Chair
Paul Dudgeon
Lorraine Hanson

A WORD OF THANKS

Throughout this process literally hundreds of people took time to share their ideas, concerns and hopes for the training system with the Panel. They were employers, industry representatives, students, training system faculty and staff, training system partners and citizens. They attended meetings, presented briefs, participated in focus groups, attended workshops and monitored our progress via the website. They represented their personal views and those of their industry associations, employers, businesses, students' associations, regulatory bodies, training system programs and services, Aboriginal institutions and organizations, unions and governments.

The Panel appreciates the time and effort made available by those from the institutions who make up the system who provided information and advice. As well, the Panel appreciates the valuable input provided by the Reference Group. In addition, many people from Saskatchewan Learning provided us with much needed briefing information and other support. In particular, the many long hours and hard work committed to the project by Dan Johnston, Harley Ast, Penny Schouten, and Jan Gray is greatly appreciated. The Panel is also indebted to Doug Elliot, Publisher of Sask Trends Monitor, whose work and publications have been used extensively in the preparation of the report.

Many people followed the activity of the Panel via the Review website and took an active role responding to issues as they emerged. The comments and suggestions have been thought provoking and have guided us to the conclusions and recommendations which are described in this document.

The Panel appreciates the level of effort and the high degree of professionalism that went into the participation, the presentations and the discussions. The Panel was impressed by the way participants in this process focused on the future and what can be done to make the system better for all Saskatchewan citizens. The interest in change to prepare for the future has been remarkable.

The Panel is indebted to everyone who took the time to be involved in this process. Your contributions were and will be vital to a better, stronger training system in Saskatchewan. We thank you all!

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Executive Summary

Review Process

The Training System Review Panel, comprised of Douglas McArthur (Chair), Paul Dudgeon and Lorraine Hanson, was established by the Minister of Learning in May 2005 to undertake a comprehensive, future-oriented review of the province's public training system.

The scope of the review was the public training system which was defined as all training activities that are publicly funded, including Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), the Regional Colleges, and the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC). As well, the Panel considered the relationships and roles of Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Campus Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Communications Network, private vocational schools, and the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board. Although not part of the actual review, the interrelationships and interactions between and among other parts of the learning sector, including the universities and the K-12 system were also considered.

The Panel reviewed existing research and literature; consulted with employers, industry associations, students' associations, regulatory bodies, Regional Colleges, Aboriginal institutions, and government departments; and reviewed briefs and submissions. In total, the panel spent more than 25 days meeting with over 170 organizations and stakeholders including meetings with administrators and staff, boards, and students at SIAST, SATCC, and all eight Regional Colleges. Faculty and staff from SIAST, Regional Colleges, Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) and the Apprenticeship Trade and Certification Commission (SATCC) participated in a one-day workshop. A cross-section of SIAST and regional college students, apprentices, employers and representatives of the general public from rural and urban centers participated in seven focus groups. Employers in Saskatoon, Weyburn and Humboldt participated in a survey, a rural focus group in Watrous and an Agriculture Round Table was held. Interested individuals and/or groups were also invited to visit and communicate with the Panel via the TSR website.

An Interim Report entitled, *What Have We Heard? An Interim Report from the Saskatchewan Training System Review Panel* was publicly released on September 9, 2005.

Context

Saskatchewan is now a "have" province. This was achieved during a period of accelerating globalization and competitiveness, significant technological change and rapid diversification of economic activity. During the past decade or more, growth and development have become dependent upon knowledge, technology and a highly skilled workforce. Human capital has become as important as natural resources. While this has been happening, the population of the province has been aging and changing. Some of these changes threaten to undermine the human capital base of the province.

As Saskatchewan moves into the second half of the decade, the province must help prepare citizens to participate fully in society and the economy. Wealth and prosperity could be available to the province in considerable abundance as we look forward to 2010 and beyond, provided the right decisions are made in the present.

Saskatchewan's economy is becoming more diversified. There has been strong growth in the knowledge-driven sectors of the economy. These sectors depend on the production, distribution, and use of knowledge and information for economic growth. Increased globalization, technological changes, and a shift towards a knowledge-based economy are propelling the need for higher skills in the labour force. Thus, a broader array of skills will be required as the provincial economy continues to diversify.

Saskatchewan is export-dependent and must be competitive nationally and internationally in order to prosper. That competitive position rests on the productivity, creativity, and flexibility of its workforce. The development and maintenance of such a workforce cannot be left solely to individuals and the private sector. The public systems have a major role.

Saskatchewan has the potential to increase employment, by a minimum twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand workers, over the next five years. If this potential is to be realized, large challenges must be addressed and significant actions must be undertaken. One of these will be to develop a workforce that is ready and able to participate in the rapidly changing economy. Another will be to ensure that workplaces are prepared and ready to receive and utilize the new workforce that is taking shape.

The learning sector must be fully integrated with labour markets. It must support learning and labour force development. There is a pressing need to ensure that knowledge and skill development is continually enhanced and that skills are updated on a regular basis. Competitiveness based on productivity must be a priority. Changes in the labour market are causing increased reliance on basic literacy, basic employability skills and a need to build on existing employees' skills. The learning sector must ensure these skills are available across the life-cycle.

A major responsibility of the learning sector will be to mobilize the potential workforce to ensure that adequate numbers with adequate skills are available to support labour market development and economic diversity and productivity. The training system must play a large part in ensuring the province has citizens who are highly literate, lifelong learners with modern workplace skills.

The training system must provide the necessary programs and services in formats and locations which assist citizens to prepare themselves to take up the employment challenges of the twenty-first century. The training system must deliver these programs and services in a cooperative and collaborative manner to a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Stakeholders include both individuals who are seeking upgrading, training or retraining and employers who are looking for employees who can function within their businesses.

Finally, the training system must ensure the province has citizens who are highly literate, lifelong learners with excellent workplace skills. This means the training system must adapt to meet the changing demands of both learners and employers. The necessary resources and infrastructure must be in place to support training at the local, regional and provincial levels. Within the new training system, this will not mean simply classrooms and lock-step course offerings. It will mean choices for learners and employers, including ongoing virtual access to programs and services and to learning support systems.

Demographics

Saskatchewan's population is projected to remain relatively stable over the next twenty years. However, significant changes are projected within the population.

The population is aging and people are retiring at an increasing rate, resulting in an inevitable decline in the size of population aged 15-65 years of age. As increasing numbers of individuals in the current workforce retire and as the economy grows and develops, Saskatchewan will face additional labour force shortages.

The birthrate for the non-Aboriginal population is decreasing, which is already resulting in fewer school-age children and will ultimately mean fewer youth entering the labour force. The birthrate for the Aboriginal population is higher than that of the non-Aboriginal population. This fast-growing segment of the population is potentially a source of new entrants to the labour force.

Economy

Saskatchewan has become a modern, knowledge-based, high value-added, export economy. Wages and salaries will continue to grow as the province competes effectively in world markets and as investment accelerates. Employment is expected to increase at a pace that will push the unemployment rate down and personal income up. Over the longer future, the pace of growth will be among the best in the country.

In order to meet the province's economic potential, the labour force will need to adapt to changing job markets with relevant training and retraining geared to shifts in skill requirements. Young people will need to be well prepared as globalization, technological change, and a knowledge-based economy fuel an increased demand for high quality education and skills training. Investing in Saskatchewan's human capital is a critical response to a growing demand for higher education and skills in a knowledge-based economy and a demographically-driven tightening of the labour market.

Labour Force Trends

Skills are a vital element of a knowledge-based economy that encompasses technical and scientific competence, as well as a broad and evolving set of essential skills that the Government of Canada defines as: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use, and continuous learning. These skills are required to some degree in almost every occupation, and have been found to underpin all other skills, serving as the foundation for other training to build upon and being transferable from job to job or work to home. The Expert Panel on Skills indicates the skill sets required in the workplaces of the future will continue to change and expand. (Advisory Council on Science and Technology 1999)

Over the next ten to fifteen years Saskatchewan, along with the rest of Canada, faces the potential for labour shortages. Overall tightening of the labour market is not expected to occur all at once, but as a series of increasing occupational shortages. These shortages are expected to be particularly evident in the rural and northern areas due to the already small populations.

Educational Attainment

The knowledge economy is creating changes within the labour force. Many jobs now require higher levels of education and training and there are fewer jobs which require less than a grade 12 education.

The completed education level of both the provincial population and those in the labour force is growing steadily, but there is a persistent gap between Saskatchewan and Canada in the proportion of the labour force that has a post-secondary education. There is a need to increase this level considerably if the Saskatchewan economy is to be internationally competitive and have the skilled workforce to support its potential.

It is estimated 93% of future job openings will require at least a high school diploma and two-thirds (66%) will require post-secondary credentials or management skills. Today, only 56% of the members of the Saskatchewan workforce are post-secondary graduates. This gap is even wider for the Aboriginal population. Aboriginal youth do not participate in post-secondary education or the labour market at the same rates as non-Aboriginal youth, resulting in considerably lower labour market participation and employment rates and a higher unemployment rate than the non-Aboriginal population.

First Nations and Métis People

There are significant differences in the labour market outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the province. The success of the Saskatchewan economy, in meeting its needs for able and skilled workers will depend heavily upon its success mobilizing First Nations and Métis people, particularly the young. It is no exaggeration to say that the hopes and expectations expressed at the 2005 Centennial Summit and in the provincial government's recently released *Saskatchewan Action Plan for the Economy* depend heavily upon this.

First Nations people already experience unemployment rates of 25% and higher. Major changes in the employed workforce can be realized by increasing participation rates and reducing unemployment for First Nations people. In order to mobilize this part of the future labour force, training must be available and good quality jobs seen as a meaningful option.

The Aboriginal youth population is the age group that will have the most significant impact on the Aboriginal labour force. With a growing population and increasing labour force participation rates, the portion of Aboriginal youth in the overall labour force more than doubles to 28% by 2025. This equates to more than one in four new entrants to the labour market being Aboriginal compared with one in ten new entrants in 2001.

The First Nations and Métis peoples are also the segment of the population with the greatest need. The average income of Aboriginal people shows this very clearly. The very best way to generate higher and more equal incomes is through employment. The evidence is clear that training pays off for those who participate.

The New Training Model

The Panel supports a New Training Model (NTM) as a means of better meeting individual and labour market needs. The training system must adapt to change in the environment in which it operates and be at the leading edge of change in learning and employment. In so doing, it must serve a wide variety of needs and interests. Some of these needs and interests can create barriers to training, giving rise to a need for dynamic adjustment, co-operation, and creative problem solving. The need for change in the training system must not be seen as a sign of failure, but rather a challenge for constant improvement so that the system can continuously transform to meet the evolving needs of learners and employers and to reflect new and changing practices in education and training.

The New Training Model is not, by any means, entirely new; it is based on sound principles of adult education and has been evolving and developing over the years. The Panel found that many within the system have been thinking in terms of the same underlying principles, and have undertaken changes on that basis.

Taken as an integrated whole, however, the NTM involves a radical transformation of training compared to its tradition definition. Many of the conventional beliefs about what constitutes good training no longer hold. The vision of training as beginning and ending at discrete points in a person's life is now an anachronism. Training is part of lifelong learning, and one part of the larger human endeavour to understand and know.

The New Training Model is designed to mobilize learners and to maximize the participation of the working population in training, as well as those getting ready to join the workforce. Opportunities are made available to the whole of the population in readily accessible, user-friendly modes. Flexibility that supports participation by those for whom it would be very disruptive and costly to travel to fixed sites is a critical aspect of the model. The NTM requires that training serves those who are already working and those who have not yet entered the workforce equally well. It recognizes that training is costly, and emphasizes more cost effective approaches to training for both the individual and society. The model ensures incentives encourage individuals to bear the cost of training are present by linking training to successful employment and uses work, as well as classrooms, and labs as vehicles for training. The NTM demands that training respond to employer and community needs and not the reverse.

The New Training Model is about choice and respect for the individual in making those choices. It does not try to impose any particular learning structure on the learner, and it maximizes the available choices and makes abundant information available to support those choices. If adopted, highly structured learning is replaced by flexible learning with a seamless continuum of choices.

The New Training Model is learner-centered and based on the philosophy of seamless, lifelong learning. Where the model is applied, training is flexible and responsive to the needs of learners, employers and communities. Life circumstances of learners are understood to be highly varied and are recognized in order to support participation. Training is accessible and inclusive, and engages individuals and communities in mobilizing learners for the world of work. Learners have choices that reflect their circumstances and needs. Time and other disruptions are recognized as costly to the individual, and the system minimizes time and disruption costs. Skills and competencies already developed are recognized and counted. Training is innovative and supported by technology. It is a partnership, including institutions, students, employers/industry, communities, and the government. Capacity needs are met in a cost-effective way with support from all of the partners, and through continuous innovation. Success is based on performance. Incentives and rewards to learners are provided through linkages to work. Industry and employers are an integral part of the system, including providing experience and training at all points in the life-cycle. Graduates and completers enter highly developed workplaces which emphasize representative workforces. Overall, the NTM is accountable for the impacts and outcomes of its actions.

The training system, like industry and workers, must adapt to rapidly changing new realities. Those that do not adapt will be displaced by new innovative providers, which may be located in other parts of the public system, in industry, or in the non-government training system. These providers may include private vocational schools, private trainers, and community-based organizations. Innovation needs to drive the system to ensure its viability.

The boundaries between the start of training and the end of training have broken down and can no longer be depended upon to design programs. The boundaries of training reach back to the schools and reach forward to employment. The linkages between training and successful employment must be addressed to ensure there are sufficient incentives to participate.

The training system cannot act alone in realizing all of the goals of individuals and society. It can, however, work to be fully integrated into those aspects of individual and community life that depend upon learning and training. It can be a catalyst and a source of inspiration, leadership and direction. In order to do that, it must be coherent and engaged, and its leadership must project a vision and direction.

The New Training Model extends training into all aspects of a learner's life, home, workplace, and community. It embraces continuous learning, recognition of prior learning, integration of learning activities, the division of traditional learning into components, decentralization, linkages to employment and work, the active mobilization of all parts of the population, and the recognition of labour market needs. The question "training for what?" suggests a choice between training for work and training for some larger human purpose and represents a view of the system that is dated. Training is for the learner, and the learner will decide.

Based on the NTM, the Panel has the following vision for the training system:

> Through training linked to personal development and employment, Saskatchewan people from all regions and communities will, to the greatest degree that they are able and willing, participate in the dynamic, highly skilled, knowledge economy of the future, serving local, regional and international markets.

The New Training Model provides vision and direction for the training system. It can deliver the vision. The best social policy is a job and support for people to become more productive and to enhance their productivity and earning capacity throughout their lives. The Saskatchewan economy has reached the point where it can deliver on the promise with the right investment, education and training, and employment policies. The task of the system is to respond in order to fulfill the vision. The NTM provides the pathway for doing so.

Focusing Change: The Next Five Years and Beyond

The next five years and beyond will present significant challenges to the training system. It must evolve and adapt in substantial ways to meet the requirements of the NTM.

There will be a need for a substantial increase in the number of people participating in training. The system will have to take a major responsibility for mobilizing a new workforce that is inclusive and prepared for a knowledge-based competitive economy.

Responsiveness

There is a clear need for a flexible training system that responds to new challenges and new opportunities. This calls for a system that can mobilize people in much greater numbers to participate in training, so that they can be effective, productive participants in the workforce. It must draw in and serve learners, who are Aboriginal, women in non-traditional occupations, rural and northern residents, and low-income and long-term unemployed people. In order to do this, it must be responsive in a multitude of ways to the needs of current and potential workers and to the situation, location, and needs of employers. The system must adapt to learners and respond to employers. Institutions and programs must relentlessly innovate and adapt in order to ensure success and efficiency.

To achieve this, the system must be agile, flexible, and responsive; this means it must reach out to learners, celebrate their differences and make participation as accessible and meaningful as possible. The system must recognize that programs and services need to be located where people live and work. Programs and services must be designed and shaped to make it possible to take training while still meeting family, community, and work responsibilities. In other words, the system must be learner-centered.

The system must at the same time meet the needs of the economy and employers. The needs of employers must be recognized in terms of occupational requirements. They must also be recognized in terms of the kind of training required and the way training is delivered. For example, essential skills, literacy, pre-employment, medium skilled, and highly technical training are all legitimate needs of different employers at different times, and locations. Employers often need to have people advance their skills while continuing to work. Continuous learning meets employers' as well as learners' needs. Employers are sometimes in a position where quick delivery of training that can contribute to further recognition is needed. Employers can and often will contribute to training, including learning provided on the job and learning based on industry credits. In order to accommodate these and other realities and needs, the training system has to be flexible and responsive to employers. Thus, the system must be both employer-centered, as well as learner-centered.

The Panel places a priority on the dual needs to serve and meet the needs of learners and employers. It has made a series of recommendations in support of this. Adherence to the NTM makes the greatest contribution in this respect.

Strategic Leadership and Investments in the Future

The system must go through rapid adaptation and change in order to achieve the full potential of the NTM. This will require that the system have more than just institutions, programs, and processes that are working well. It will also require that leadership be provided to the system. A supporting policy framework will be needed. Research and development around new and better practices will be essential. Advice and knowledge will play an important role in making the NTM work in the varying circumstances and conditions within the system. Decisions will increasingly be based on evidence, solid data, and past experiences.

Perhaps most importantly, the system needs to be represented by a common voice that speaks for the system, and its needs and expectations. The new system will require communication, consultation, and engagement with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders. The training system must be effectively represented within government and across industry and employment sectors. Communities and a broad base of organizations must be engaged and encouraged to work within the system. The urgency of training needs must be articulated forcefully and knowledgeably.

In order for all of this to be done in a meaningful and effective way, the system needs a strong central voice and advocate. It needs leadership that keeps the system focused on the path that has been set out and works to protect and enhance commitment to the NTM. In the absence of such leadership, the Panel does not believe that the NTM can achieve its full potential, which would be regrettable. There is so much that needs to be done, and it is dependent upon a full and robust adoption of the NTM throughout the system.

The responsibility for this leadership must come from Saskatchewan Learning. Saskatchewan Learning must make the training system a high priority in all that it does. Training must be seen as an investment in the future.

Training has not enjoyed the priority that it should within the department in the past; the K-12 school system and universities have taken precedent. It is essential that the importance of training infuse all relevant sections within the department, including the branches which deal with the K-12 school system and the universities.

Most importantly, Saskatchewan Learning must mobilize the whole education and training system for action. It must take the lead in ensuring that the potential of the system is realized and that the challenges are met. Most of the direct work to get the job done will fall to the training institutions and organizations and to employers; however without active, engaged and committed leadership, success, as set out in this report, is unlikely.

It is important to recognize that participation in the system must increase and change. The Panel has suggested that participation in the system by 2010/11 should be 30% above that in 2004/05. There also must be a recognition that participation will change and most importantly become more inclusive.

Innovation and adaptation associated with the NTM must assume a substantial part of the burden for achieving this higher level of participation. Adoption of technology, Recognition of Prior Learning and other innovations will realize systemic gains in participation levels. In the future, innovations based on the NTM must specifically be directed at achieving participation gains.

New investments in the system will also be required. Expanding the number of participants will require additional resources, both in operations and facilities. Saskatchewan Learning must take the lead in identifying the needed extra resources and ensure that they are used effectively in accordance with the NTM.

Planning and Coordination

The modern training system is complex. There are many actors involved in the provision of training and many who have needs and opportunities that need to be served. The learner population is very diverse. Employers are also very different and widely distributed geographically. The linkages and connections in the system are many and varied. They must work as smoothly and as effectively as possible. There is a need for seamlessness in the system, and that requires a high degree of integration. This challenges the system to plan and to achieve a high degree of alignment.

Achieving the outcomes set out for the system will require a much greater degree of planning and coordination. Planning and coordination must be a responsibility of all of those in the system. However, there are certain aspects that require system wide measures in order to be successful.

One of these is with respect to ensuring that labour market needs are articulated and taken into account. This means that industry and occupational changes must be analyzed and tracked. The results must be timely and aggregated to the degree and extent needed to ensure that the system, as complex as it is, responds and adapts. Training must be prioritized on the basis of accurate needs assessments and resources allocated to obtain the highest value results. The information system must structure the data so that it can be used in a timely way.

The labour market information system should also identify, in a timely and meaningful way, shifts and changes in preferred ways to access and deliver training. Different employers, at different times, have different preferences and needs in terms of the content, mode of delivery, and institutional roles in providing the training. The labour market information system should provide the training system with full and complete labour market needs and intelligence, and not just numbers tied to occupational projections.

The Panel has made proposals for improvement in this respect. The overall coordination of the system does not end with improved intelligence about labour markets. There is also a need for the major participants to engage in an organized way and to cooperatively address challenges and problems. At the present time, the system lacks an effective forum for this to take place.

Strategic central planning is essential for a complex system such as the training system. The existing fragmented strategic planning and policy processes are not robust enough, and not inclusive enough to be fully effective. A smoothly working system needs sufficient central coordination to develop effective strategic plans and policy advice. There is also a need to ensure that plans and policies are effectively articulated and communicated. Key actors must have a voice in the direction of the system, and know and understand the priorities of the training system and where each fits within the system.

Communications are also important in a well functioning system. Many employers do not have an opportunity to communicate at the strategic and higher level planning processes. Others in the system are in a similar position, even though most have some form of partial engagement for certain purposes through committees and task groups.

The panel has addressed these latter issues of planning and coordination with a new process to address higher level coordination, strategic planning, and policy advisory issues. A new cross system Council with significant participation by employers is proposed.

Aligning the System

The New Training Model requires that the system be responsive and flexible. Training institutions must be focused on programs and services to learners and employers. Adherence to regulations and operational policy and procedures are expected and boards and management held accountable by government. The focus of the NTM is on system innovation and flexibility and not on control. Regional Colleges, SIAST and the SATCC are partners within the training system who are legally accountable to the citizens through the government and ethically accountable to each other. System-wide communication and planning are essential. Oversight of one training institution by another is not consistent with the NTM.

The training system has a long history based on certain assumptions and requirements. For a very long time, the system served students recently out of school who were young, single, mobile, largely urban, and from families in trades or manual occupations. The graduates worked in highly routinized work environments where essential techniques could be clearly defined in relation to standardized technology.

However, work environments have changed a great deal. Today's quality programs require flexible curricula and instructional practices which meet the specific requirements of employers and learners.

Saskatchewan's training system is a well developed, mature system. The brokerage system, through which SIAST certificates and diplomas are delivered by the regional colleges and the trade boards (which maintain a high degree of regulation over SIAST pre-trades courses), are examples of situations where quality is linked to rigid controls by one part of the system over another. The Panel has concluded these constraints are no longer necessary nor are they conducive to a well functioning training system. The Regional Colleges and DTI have the capacity to make well informed training decisions. Less regulation and more flexibility will contribute to more effective functioning of the training system.

In the future, Regional Colleges and DTI should be empowered to grant their own credit for certificate programs where they deem it to be advantageous, however, they would also have the option of using programs and courses where SIAST (or another similar institution) would grant the credit. It will, nevertheless, be important that credits for courses from Saskatchewan public training institutions and organizations be transferable to other training institutions and organizations through an effective system of recognition of prior learning and credit transfer. This will not only ensure students have a full range of choices about how to proceed with their learning plans at minimum cost, but it will also ensure that there is continuing integration of learning outcomes within the training model. Under this new approach, Regional Colleges (including DTI) that wish to continue to operate under the brokerage system will be free to do so but the regulatory burden would be reduced.

First Nations and Métis Learners

The New Training Model requires that there be no barriers to full participation, all learners are welcomed, respected, and valued. This philosophy empowers the system to change and adapt in order to meet the needs of all learners whatever their circumstances. This in turn helps ensure that the full potential labour force is mobilized through training and its linkages to employment.

First Nations and Métis people are going to assume a much greater importance in the workforce of the future. In the absence of their full participation, and particularly the youth, the Saskatchewan economy has little hope of realizing its potential. Indeed, a shortage of labour would doom the economy to overall decline and lower standards of living. The new export driven opportunities will not be realizable, and the ability to compete in the highly competitive world economy undermined.

This potential within the workforce must be mobilized. A focus on mobilization of the First Nations and Métis for work in the provincial economy must be given the highest priority. This is not solely the responsibility of the training system. The schools must do a much better job at preparing youth with the literacy and essential skills they need and in retaining students through to Grade 12 graduation. Employers must prepare workplaces by breaking down the barriers to success by Aboriginal workers. Aboriginal representative workplace initiatives must become the standard. Training institutions and government departments must become leaders in this respect. Commitments are needed throughout government, industry, labour, education, and training institutions to address all aspects of this mobilization effort.

Training will be the essential bridge to meeting the workforce needs. A high priority must be placed on increasing the participation and success of First Nations and Métis people in the training system. The Panel has addressed this issue in some detail. Partnerships and improved connections to communities are needed. Barriers to successful participation must be broken down. Learner and community centered training must take priority in mobilizing this population. Training must be undertaken in an environment that supports and encourages Aboriginal participants. There are many workable practices and models. They simply must be adopted on a wide scale throughout the system. The New Training Model requires that the design and delivery of training be culturally relevant and supportive of participation and success for all learners and for Aboriginal learners especially. In many cases this will call for major transformations in the way training is provided.

The effort to mobilize First Nations and Métis participation in training must include those in both urban and rural settings. SIAST has the primary responsibility for training in the four large urban centers. It must make increased successful participation an absolute priority, given the large number of Aboriginal people in theses cities. It is also important that the Regional Colleges reach out to reserve residents, particularly but not solely, the young. This means that Regional Colleges must be mandated to provide training to reserve residents, including providing programs on the reserves in partnership with the First Nations governments and training institutions and organizations.

One of the important vehicles for serving the training needs of First Nations people has been the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT). It has developed into a mature, effective First Nations training institute within First Nations jurisdiction.

The issue of jurisdiction for Aboriginal programs and services is one that has existed within the training system for some time. Jurisdictional concerns and the fear of further federal government off-loading has limited provincial funding to SIIT. Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies' ability to fulfill its potential in mobilizing and preparing First Nations people for employment has been seriously hampered by this policy. The Panel has concluded that SIIT should be treated as an equal partner in the provincial training system, and that funding should be provided to support its operations. The funding arrangements that apply to the system generally should apply to SIIT and this funding should be regularized. Also increased funding from the federal government is imperative.

Financing Mechanisms

The Panel has reviewed the arrangements through which financing is provided to institutions in the system and concluded that more flexible funding arrangements would better support the NTM.

In order to support maximum responsiveness, funding of training in the system should generally be provided on the basis of actual participation of learners and their success.

The way that money is currently provided to the system can act as a disincentive to flexible responses that are consistent with the NTM. All financing should be results based. Increased funding should only be provided if participation increases. The Panel favours a system of overall funding based on actual participation and success of participants with appropriate weighting for different kinds and intensity of training.

New funding arrangements will require new accountability mechanisms. Results-based funding under the NTM requires accountability arrangements that reward positive results while encouraging flexibility and innovation.

Federal Government Participation

Meeting future demands for training will require a seamless flexible system based on the NTM. It will also require increased resources. The federal government has made various commitments to increase support for post-secondary education including training. To date, none of these commitments has, in support of training, materialized.

The burden of cost to finance the increased training needed should not solely fall on provincial taxpayers. Learners and trained workers are very mobile. The benefits of training serve the overall national economy. There is also a large fiscal imbalance in Canada today.

The Panel's view is that the increased costs associated with training over the next five years must be shared by the federal and provincial governments. Federal support must be injected into the training system if success is to be realized. The most equitable approach would be equal sharing. The provincial government should have an obligation to meet one-half of the estimated increase in costs, and the federal government the other one-half.

This should be done in such a way that a seamless integrated system based on the NTM is not compromised. Support should go to learners and institutions within an integrated public system. This is the only way that the NTM can be made to work.

1 Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Mandate of the Panel

Saskatchewan's economy and labour market are undergoing significant changes. Increased globalization and competitiveness, rapid technological change and a diversifying economy are driving a growing demand for post-secondary education in the labour force, with over 65% of new jobs requiring some post-secondary education.

Saskatchewan is experiencing an ever-increasing, demographically driven tightening of the labour market and potential skill shortages due to an aging labour force. At the same time, the province has a growing young Aboriginal population that is potentially its greatest asset in offsetting this decline. Increasing the education levels of Aboriginal people is a key to Saskatchewan labour force development.

Employers have expressed concerns over a shortage of qualified human resources, difficulties in hiring, and a need for skills training. Employees must have basic education plus employability and job readiness skills, and there is an increasing need for technical and specialized skills.

Saskatchewan's training system is essential to the province's labour force development in the 21st century. It must operate efficiently and effectively in order to prepare Saskatchewan residents with the skill sets that Saskatchewan employers require to operate competitively in the global economy. It is important that the key components of the public training system – Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), Regional Colleges and the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) – as well as the other components (Aboriginal institutions and private vocational schools) perform as a seamless system, thereby ensuring residents' and employers' need for skills and careers are met in a timely manner.

Both the SIAST and the Regional Colleges Acts require that "the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall, at least once in every five years, appoint a committee to review and report on the mandate of SIAST/Regional Colleges. . . . and any other matters concerning this Act that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may specify."

The last SIAST and Regional Colleges review were completed in 1999/2000. The SATCC was implemented in 1999. Therefore, an opportunity exists to conduct a review process that addresses the mandates of each of the three organizations - SIAST, Regional Colleges and SATCC – in an integrated manner that also facilitates a review of the Saskatchewan training system and how it can be positioned to best meet the needs of Saskatchewan's labour market in the 21st century.

A comprehensive, future-oriented review of the province's training system was announced by Learning Minister Andrew Thomson on May 11, 2005. As part of the announcement, Minister Thomson indicated, "As a 'have' province that is seeing significant growth in our jobs and our economy, we need to ensure that Saskatchewan students and youth will be able to take full advantage of the opportunities this growth represents". Minister Thomson went on to say that, "we need to make sure our training system remains world class and flexible enough to meet industry needs."

The 2005 Training System Review Panel includes:

Douglas McArthur: Chair, former Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Deputy Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, and Minister of Saskatchewan Education. He is currently Professor of Public Policy and Distinguished Policy Fellow, Simon Fraser University.

Paul Dudgeon: former SIAST Board Chair, Vice-President of Academics, and Director of the School of Business and Public Administration at the First Nations University of Canada. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Business and Public Administration at the First Nations University of Canada.

Lorraine Hanson: former Southeast Regional College Board Chair, she has served as a trustee in the Broadview School Division. She is currently the Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Elcapo.

The scope of the review was the public training system. The public training system is defined as all training activities that are publicly funded including SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and the SATCC. As well, the Panel considered the relationships and roles with other sector partners, including: Gabriel Dumont Institute (DTI), Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), Campus Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN), private vocational schools and the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB). Although not part of the actual review, the interrelationships and interactions between and among other parts of the learning sector, including the universities and the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system (K-12) were considered.

The purpose of the review was to develop recommendations on how best to position the training system to meet the needs of Saskatchewan's labour force development for the next 10-15 years. The recommendations focus on:

- ensuring high quality programs, services and resources are available to help learners succeed in their post-secondary programs and career objectives;
- providing a seamless continuum of formal and informal learning opportunities for students moving through the K-12 system, Regional Colleges, SATCC, SIAST, Aboriginal Institutions, private vocational schools, and universities;

- ensuring that the training system is inclusive in meeting the needs of learners with diverse needs, including: Aboriginal persons, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, low income persons and persons with special needs;
- ensuring that the training system responds to and meets the human resource and skill needs of Saskatchewan employers and employees in rural, northern and urban areas of the province; and,
- ensuring the mandates of the training system partners are appropriate to support the economic and social development of the province.

1.2 Process for the Review

The following tasks were undertaken by the Panel:

- review of existing research and literature related to the current promising practices related to post-secondary training;
- more than 24 days of consultations with over 200 organizations and stakeholders, including: employers, industry associations, students and students' associations, regulatory bodies, eight Regional Colleges, SIAST, Aboriginal institutions, the SATCC, and government departments. As well, a website accessible to the public, where individuals and organizations could submit briefs, was set up. There were over 100 written briefs submitted to the Panel;
- a workshop with faculty and staff from SIAST, the Regional Colleges, DTI, and the SATCC to solicit views on the training system;
- seven focus group sessions with a cross-section of SIAST and regional college students, apprentices, employers and the general public in both rural and urban centers;
- a survey of employers in Saskatoon, Weyburn, and Humboldt; and,
- an Agriculture Round Table with representation from key stakeholders.

An Interim Report entitled *What Have We Heard? An Interim Report from the Saskatchewan Training System Review Panel* was publicly released on September 9, 2005. The Interim Report, written prior to completion of the consultations, provided an overview of what the Panel had learned up to that point in its process.

1.3 Saskatchewan Centennial Summit

In January 2005, the Premier hosted the Saskatchewan Centennial Summit which provided a major forum for business, labour, community, First Nations, and youth leaders to celebrate Saskatchewan's economic successes and explore the province's future challenges and opportunities. The Summit brought together a select group of almost 400 leaders with a broad spectrum of experience and expertise from within Saskatchewan, as well as representatives from the business and investment community from across Canada.

The Summit facilitated discussion and analysis about the economic evolution of Saskatchewan. As well, it encouraged discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing the province and examined the role Saskatchewan's youth will play as the province moves into a new century. Employers attending the Summit expressed growing concern that the provincial economy is quickly outpacing the supply of labour.

Discussions indicated that education and training are essential elements of Saskatchewan's future. Participants concluded today's students need better career development services, the trades need to be "glamourized" and the youth advantage in the Aboriginal population must be maximized. Employers identified a shortage of qualified people, difficulties in hiring, and a need for skills training.

There was a clear message that now is the time for decisive action and clear direction to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities before us. The *Saskatchewan Action Plan for the Economy* responds to that call with a vision and an action framework for growth, jobs and prosperity.

As a part of the province's response to the Centennial Summit, the Training System Review has focused on training priorities for future investment.

1.4 Previous Reviews

- *Saskatchewan Training Strategy*

  The announcement by the federal government in 1996 that they were withdrawing their support and funding of labour market training was a catalyst for Saskatchewan to undertake a major review of its training system to ensure it was healthy and sustainable. The review focused on ensuring programs and services were comprehensive and integrated within a coherent and effective delivery system.

  This review resulted in the 1997 Saskatchewan Training Strategy (STS). The vision of the STS was:

  > Saskatchewan people will have access to flexible, relevant, quality training opportunities that respond to their needs and the needs of the labour market. Governments, institutions, industry and communities will work together to enable people to enhance their employability and to contribute to the economic and social development of the province.

  Objectives for the STS included:

  - develop a skilled workforce relevant to Saskatchewan's labour market;
  - enhance access and support opportunities for all learners; and,
  - create a coherent, effective and sustainable delivery system.

- *Five Year Reviews completed in 2000*

The SIAST Review, *Building on Strength*, contained 39 recommendations (Progress Report on actions – Appendix 1) regarding strategic direction for SIAST with a focus on four overriding priorities:

- **An appropriate and progressive mandate:** An appropriate and progressive mandate for SIAST will enable the institution to contribute fully to Saskatchewan's future economic and social development and to a coherent and coordinated post-secondary system. SIAST's responsibilities for programs and services should evolve to fit new circumstances and needs in the province.

- **A commitment to accessibility:** A commitment to enhancing access to SIAST programs and services for all people throughout Saskatchewan must be at the center of SIAST's decision-making, taking into account the need to balance accessibility with quality, resources and labour market demands.

- **Responsiveness to the labour market:** SIAST must address priority skills needs within Saskatchewan's labour market and develop extensive linkages with employers to respond to emerging skills requirements and to develop innovative and flexible ways of meeting these needs.

- **Organizational effectiveness:** Having become a unified provincial institution, SIAST must revitalize organizational policies and processes to be effective in working within its new structure. SIAST's vision, planning, communications, human resource management, and relationships with other organizations are aspects of its effectiveness as a provincial institution which need to be addressed.

The Regional College Review, *Futures Close to Home*, contained 53 recommendations (Progress Report on actions – Appendix 2) regarding strategic direction for Regional Colleges with a focus on four over-arching priorities:

- **Responsiveness to education and training needs:** Responsiveness to the education and training needs of learners, employers and communities must be at the center of regional college decision making, operations and accountability. Regional Colleges need to adopt new strategies and partnerships to ensure responsiveness in the future while building on the success of their current mandate and model of operations.

- **A commitment to support for learners:** A commitment to supporting learners with diverse needs and circumstances must continue to be a focal point for Regional Colleges to ensure access and equity for all people in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

- **Regional Colleges within an integrated delivery system:** The future evolution of Regional Colleges should contribute to developing an integrated delivery system for post-secondary education and skills training through enhanced collaboration and co-operation with other regional partners, among colleges and with government and other provincial institutions.

- **Effective governance, management and support:** Regional Colleges and the government must work towards strengthening governance, management and support for colleges to enable them to meet the challenges and resource pressures of the future.

1.5 Approach of the Panel

In undertaking this review, the Panel decided to approach the questions on the basis of a number of organizing principles which are important to training in Saskatchewan. These include:

- **Comprehensive and Integrated**: The training system provides a comprehensive, integrated array of programs and services that meet the needs of learners, industry and the province.

- **Shared Responsibility**: The training system partners, stakeholders and learners have a shared responsibility to ensure learner success in post-secondary education programs and employment.

- **Accountable**: The training system is accountable for the effective and efficient use of resources in preparing learners for jobs and careers in Saskatchewan.

- **Quality**: Training system partners are committed to providing curriculum, programs and services that meet industry and/or publicly recognized standards.

- **Equity**: Training system partners are committed to working together to ensure the inclusion of Aboriginal persons, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, low-income persons and persons with special needs in training programs leading to higher education levels and improved labour force participation and success.

- **Responsive**: The training system responds to the changing needs in the labour market.

- **Mobility**: The training system maximizes the recognition and transfer of credits and skills to increase mobility for learners and workers.

- **Transparent**: Program/service improvements or changes must be transparent to the learners, employers and taxpayers.

- **Sustainable**: A high quality training system must be responsive and sustainable over the long-term in order to address labour force development on an ongoing basis.

The Panel has applied these principles to broad themes that are based on the 2005 Training System Review mandate. These themes include meeting labour market needs, providing high quality programs and institutions based on modern learning approaches, inclusiveness and participation based on equal outcomes, maximum effectiveness through integration and seamlessness, and support for provincial, regional and local economic and social development. Research contributing to these themes has been broadly organized around them, and the presentations made to the Panel and the ensuing discussions have reflected them. The report discusses and reports on each theme, sometimes as a separate topic and at other times in analyzing the system and its various parts. Many of these themes relate to all parts of the system, and can only effectively be considered by applying them across the system.

2

The Economy

Chapter 2: The Economy

Please note: Sections of the report reflect research work recently completed by the Department of Learning, namely the *Overview of the Saskatchewan Economy and Labour Market (September 2005),* that provides a synopsis of economic, demographic, and labour market trends in Saskatchewan.

2.1 Overview

- *Global Economy*

In 2004, the global economy continued its cyclical recovery and reached a 4% growth rate compared to 2.8% in 2003. All regions, except South Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States,[1] experienced more rapid growth in 2004 than in 2003 despite the dampening effect of high oil prices driven by high consumer demand in the United States. Global economic growth is projected to be slightly lower in 2005 at 3.25%.

The benefits of economic growth spread to almost every corner of the globe in 2004, from South America to Africa and Eastern Europe. North America exhibited the highest growth rates with Canada and the United States averaging 3.6% in 2004.

The world economy entered 2005 with significant momentum that is expected to continue in the short-term, but at a slower pace. Higher prices for oil and several other commodities have already decelerated growth somewhat. Policy changes in the United States and China to avoid overheating of their economies will re-enforce this trend. Strong demand by these two countries in 2004 contributed to an almost unprecedented surge in the price of oil since the oil crisis of the 1970s. There are differing views on the direction and extent of movement of oil prices; however, it is anticipated that substantial price increases in oil and other commodities will not be observed in the very short-term, as world demand eases and countries experience more moderate growth in 2005.

The volume of international trade increased with global economic growth in 2004 and strong demand for imports by the United States. The largest portion of this increase was attributable to developing countries, led by China and India. More moderate world economic growth expected in 2005 should be accompanied by a corresponding slowdown of international trade growth, from 10% in 2004 to 8% in 2005. External global imbalances continued to have an impact on foreign exchange markets and expectations of sustained economic growth, particularly in the United States.

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[1] Includes twelve of the former Soviet Republics.

A widening current account deficit, coupled with a large fiscal shortfall, re-enforced the depreciation of the U.S. dollar against most major currencies, especially the yen and the euro. Given the composition of U.S. trade flows, it is unlikely that the current trend will be reversed in the short-term, despite attempts by foreign central banks to counteract the appreciation of their currencies by intervening in the foreign exchange markets and slightly raising domestic interest rates.

- *Canadian Economy*

The Canadian economy experienced an average growth year in 2004. After a strong first half, the growth of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) slowed to an annual rate of 2.8% led by moderation in export demand which was largely due to the negative impact on global output of high oil and other commodity prices. This trend is expected to continue in 2005 as countries enter the next stage of economic recovery. Real GDP is expected to grow at 2.3% in 2005 and 2.8% in 2006.

The Canadian economy can be divided into two distinct sectors, export-led and domestic, with different prospects in 2005. The export-led sector experienced high rates of growth until the second half of 2004 as global demand began to decelerate and the pace of economic growth worldwide moderated. The rapid appreciation of the Canadian dollar was the main reason for the subsequent decline in exports.

Another contributing factor was the emergence of China as a major player in international trade. China has been increasing its share of the American market and providing greater competition for Canadian exports in the process. However, China is also a growing market for raw materials which make up a substantial portion of Canadian exports. Overall, it is expected that the growth in Canadian exports will be lower in 2005 as a result of the strong domestic currency in terms of the U.S. dollar, the high volume of goods and services going to the United States relative to other countries, and waning external demand.

On the domestic front, several years of large federal fiscal surpluses have laid a solid foundation for increased public investment in infrastructure and social programs. The Bank of Canada's policy of targeting low inflation, in the range of 1% to 3%, has also created favourable conditions for sustained economic growth. Consumer spending was relatively strong in 2004 as a result of employment gains and higher real disposable income. High consumer confidence is expected to continue in 2005, leading to increased consumer spending by 3.2% compared to the previous year. In 2005, domestic investment is expected to increase by 3.6% led by strong growth in capital investment of 8.3%. This is partly attributable to firms' attempts to improve productivity and stay internationally competitive in light of dampened short-term prospects for export growth. As a reflection of the strong demand for housing, low interest rates and flexible borrowing arrangements, housing starts reached a 16 year record high of 233,000 units in 2004, a level that is expected to drop by 20,000 in 2005. Housing investment is also expected to moderate. Contributing factors for the expected slowdown in housing activity are projected increases in interest rates, low population growth, and rising consumer debt.

The Canadian labour market is expected to perform strongly in 2005. The unemployment rate dropped from 7.6% in 2003 to 7.2% in 2004, and employment growth is expected to continue, leading to an increase in personal real disposable income.

Federal budget surpluses are planned to continually increase over the next five fiscal years and reach $7 billion in 2009-2010, and the federal government is promising to follow an expansive fiscal policy. The 2005-2006 federal budget contains new tax cuts and spending that will exceed $13.5 billion over the next three years. The largest increases will occur in national defense, early childcare development and shifting a portion of the gasoline tax to municipalities. There is also a sustained commitment to health care, Aboriginal communities, and the environment.

- *Saskatchewan Economy*

Growth continued in the Saskatchewan economy at 3.5% in 2004, following an increase of 4.5% in 2003. Real GDP is forecast to increase by a further 3.0% in 2005 before slowing down to 2.7% in 2006. Sustained high commodity prices and strong international export demand have been the main factors, although the domestic manufacturing, housing and retail sectors have also experienced good business conditions. Figures for 2004 indicate an increase in the level of new capital investment by 4% in the public and private sectors. Estimates for 2005 show an even bigger increase of 12.6% that could have a positive impact on economic growth.

The agricultural sector has seen improved conditions after two years of drought in 2001 and 2002. Crop production rose by 46% in 2003, but slowed to a 20% growth in 2004, given the cool and wet summer and the early frost. The majority of crops had above average yields, but despite the increase in the quantity, the crop quality was below average as a result of the adverse weather conditions. In 2004, total farm cash receipts increased by 7.8% to over $6.1 billion compared to 2003. The cattle industry, on the other hand, has struggled since the 2003 discovery of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in Alberta that caused a 24% decline in slaughter cattle marketed and a 9% decline in feeder cattle marketed in the province for a total decline of 12% in the same year. However, the drop was only temporary as the number of cattle marketed increased by 11% in 2004. Slaughter cattle marketed jumped by 37% and feeder cattle increased more moderately at 5%. Since 2003, two more cases of BSE have been confirmed in Alberta. However, on July 14, 2005, the border with the United States was reopened for live cattle from Canada, which should improve the future prospects of the Canadian cattle industry. The short-term outlook for the agricultural sector in Saskatchewan is uncertain despite projected growth of 5.2% for 2005 and 3.3% for 2006.

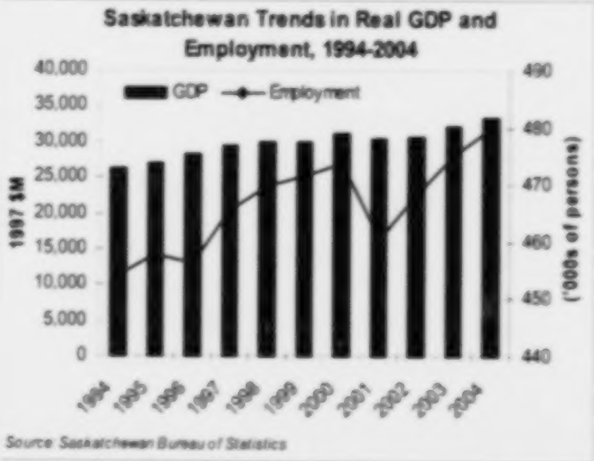
The province experienced moderate employment growth of 4,500 jobs (or 0.9%) in 2004 after a more substantial job growth in 2003 of 7,100 new jobs (or 1.5%). Employment averaged 480,000 jobs in 2004 with 80% being full-time and the remaining 20% part-time. Saskatchewan continues to experience one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country with an average annual rate of 5.4% in 2004 that was significantly below the national average of 7.2%. In the short-term (2005 and 2006), employment and personal income in Saskatchewan are projected to steadily grow on an annual basis (0.9% to 1.0% and 1.9% to 4.0% respectively), and the unemployment rate to decrease to just above 5%.

Inflation, based on the All-Items Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 2.2% in 2004. Higher energy costs contributed to an annual increase in the transportation and shelter indices by 3.2% and 2.8% respectively. Food was 2.2% more expensive and the prices of alcohol and tobacco products jumped by 5.1% during the same period. In 2005 and 2006, the CPI is expected to be around 2%, but to also follow a gradual upward trend.

Compared to other provinces, Saskatchewan exhibited strong economic performance in 2004. The growth rate of real GDP was 3.5%, the third-highest among all provinces, and higher than the national average of 2.8%. The province posted the fastest growth in the country in nominal GDP, nominal and real GDP per capita, personal disposable income, personal income, and personal disposable income per capita, and productivity (real GDP/employment).

- *Key economic indicators and the industries contributing to Saskatchewan's GDP*

Figure 2.1



Saskatchewan Trends in Real GDP and Employment, 1994-2004

Source: Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics

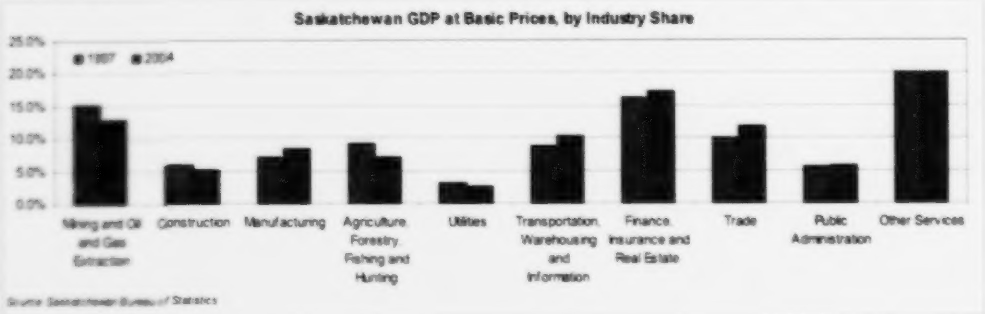
Oil and gas, agriculture, manufacturing, exports, and the service industries are important for economic growth and employment in Saskatchewan and are given special attention. In addition to the most recent data, the analysis includes multi-year trends of the examined economic variables.

Saskatchewan's real GDP was estimated at $33.4 billion in 2004, growing at an annual average rate of 2.4% over the past decade. Real GDP increased annually for most of past decade, with the exception of 1999 and 2001. Real GDP is expected to reach $34.2 billion in 2005. Between 1994 and 2004, employment numbers rose steadily as well, reflecting the strength of the economy. The province gained a total of 25,700 new workers averaging 0.6% annually. (Figure 2.1)

Rising employment levels mirrored a stronger demand for labour that resulted in higher earnings throughout the economy. The average weekly earnings in the goods-producing industries rose by 6.8% between 1998 and 2004 and those in the service industries increased by 17.2%. The average weekly industrial aggregate earnings rose by 14.5% during the same period, which was in line with the 14.7% increase in the inflation rate.

Each industry's contribution to Saskatchewan's real GDP in 2004 is shown in the graph below (Figure 2.2). There was little change in industry shares between 1997 and 2004 with the top three industries ranking the same at both the beginning and the end of the observed period. In 2004, other services[2] accounted for 19.9% of the province's real GDP; finance, insurance and real estate accounted for 17%; and mining, oil and gas accounted for 12.8%.

Figure 2.2



Source: Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics

There were no significant structural changes in the provincial economy between 1997 and 2004. Overall, the goods-producing industries contributed slightly more than one-third of Saskatchewan's real GDP in 2004, a decrease from 40% in 1997, while the service industries increased their share to two-thirds, from 60% to 64.5%.

Saskatchewan's economy is heavily influenced by changes in commodity prices, as primary industries, such as agriculture, forestry, mining, oil and gas account for a large portion of the province's GDP (almost a quarter). Saskatchewan is also one of the most trade dependent provinces in Canada. Exports and imports both exhibited a general upward trend from 1994 to 2004. Exports to the rest of Canada and abroad grew by almost 87% during this period, and imports grew by more than 76%. In 2004, Saskatchewan's trade surplus ballooned to $2.1 billion, from $350 million in 1994.

Saskatchewan is the second largest crude oil and third largest natural gas producing province in Canada. This has enabled the growth of a strong oil and gas industry that has become more important in recent months due to soaring oil prices that many experts predict will remain high in the short-term. Natural gas prices have also experienced an increase, but to a lesser extent. Between 1994 and 2004, crude oil production increased by more than 43%, from 17.2 million to 24.6 million cubic metres. During the same period, natural gas production increased by 10%, from 8.5 billion to 9.4 billion cubic metres. The value of sales of both crude oil and natural gas followed an upward trend in the last 10 years, but this trend was more pronounced in crude oil. The value of crude oil sales jumped almost threefold from $1.9 billion in 1994 to $5.6 billion in 2004, and the value of natural gas sales more than tripled from $0.5 billion to $1.6 billion.

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[2] Other services include: repair and maintenance; personal and laundry services; religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organizations; and private households.

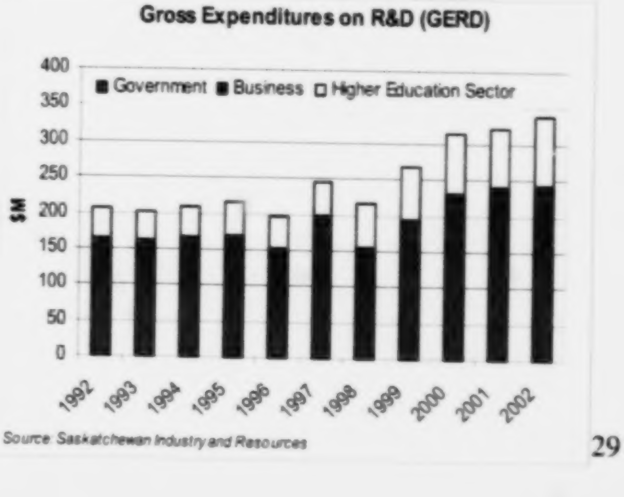
Manufacturing is another important industry in the Saskatchewan economy as it contributes significantly to the province's exports and GDP. Manufacturing shipments have experienced a substantial increase in value in the last decade, more than doubling from $4.3 billion in 1994 to $9.7 billion in 2004. The average annual growth rate of manufacturing shipments during the observed period was 8.5%.

The agriculture industry in Saskatchewan experienced a period of fluctuations between 1994 and 2004, although the overall trend of production and trade was skewed upward. Over the observed period, farm cash receipts increased by 21%, from $5 billion to $6.1 billion. This was at an annual average increase of just less than 2%. Farm cash receipts include receipts from the sales of crops and livestock, as well as payments received from various subsidies and agricultural insurance programs.

Crop production and cattle marketing (i.e., provincial exports and imports of live cattle) followed a similar trend over the last decade despite years of drought and BSE. Between 1994 and 2004, crop production rose by 12.5%, from 23.2 million tonnes to 26.1 million tonnes.

The total number of cattle marketed jumped by more than 41% between 1994 and 2004 despite the observed significant fall in 2003 (12.3%) as a result of the closing of the U.S. border to live Canadian cattle. A year later, cattle marketing increased by 11%, mostly due to increased trade between Saskatchewan and Alberta. Over the 10-year period, cattle marketing increased at an annual average rate of 3.5%.

Figure 2.3



Gross Expenditures on R&D (GERD)

Source: Saskatchewan Industry and Resources

Research and development (R&D) in productive resources are important for the ability of the Saskatchewan's economy to grow and create jobs in the future. The public, private and higher-education (i.e., post-secondary institutions) sectors all invest in R&D activities. Gross expenditures on R&D increased by 65% from $205 million in 1992 to

$339 million in 2002. The higher-education sector more than doubled its contribution, and the private and public sectors increased their contributions by 63% and 40% respectively (Figure 2.3).

Consumer confidence was high in the 1994-2004 period as a result of the increase in employment and real disposable income, which was a consequence of the growing provincial economy. This was evidenced by the increase in the volume of retail trade and the number of housing starts. Retail trade has steadily increased every year during the observed period at an average rate of 5.1% annually.

Housing starts have experienced a higher degree of fluctuation than retail trade. Housing construction boomed in the second half of the 1990s, slowed down in 2000 and 2001 and increased again in the following three years. Low interest rates helped Saskatchewan hit a record high for housing starts in 2004. Over the observed period, the annual average growth rates for Regina and Saskatoon were 10.4% and 8.8%, respectively. There was effectively no growth in housing starts in areas outside the two major cities in the province.

Public and private spending on goods and services in Saskatchewan has steadily grown during the period 1994-2004. However, private expenditures increased at a much faster rate than public expenditures. Private expenditures on goods and services grew at an annual average rate of 1.5%, while public expenditures on goods and services grew at an annual average rate of 1.3%. The proportion of private expenditures out of total expenditures was approximately 73% in 2004 compared to 71% in 1994.

In 2004, new capital investment in Saskatchewan increased by 4.0%, to $7.5 billion compared to 2003. The private sector accounted for $6 billion or 80%, and the public sector contributed $1.5 billion or 20% of total expenditures. New capital investment in Saskatchewan is projected to increase to $8.5 billion in 2005, an increase of 12.6%. This will be the highest growth rate among the provinces and double the national growth rate. This more than anything else illustrates that the pace of the economic growth is accelerating and will like continue to do so for some time.

Small business remains an important contributor to economic activity in the province as the sector accounts for the majority of firms in the province. Businesses with less than 20 employees comprised 87.9% of all private sector enterprises in 2004, and an additional 8.1% of businesses in Saskatchewan had 20 to 49 employees.

2.2 Looking Forward

Saskatchewan has become a modern, knowledge based, high value added export economy. Wages and salaries will continue to grow as the province competes effectively in work markets and as investment accelerates. Looking forward, the resources sectors are going through a period of rapid growth, driven by world demand. Uranium prices are at record high levels. Mines are operating at full capacity and the prospects are good for further expansion and investment. Diamond deposits have stimulated considerable interest in the Fort a la Corne area, and substantial investments in this sector are likely. Potash continues to experience strong demand and will be a source of ongoing strength.

A sector with both immediate and long-term growth prospects is the oil and gas sector. The sector is booming in the southeast and across the western regions of the province. While prices are expected to moderate somewhat from the current record highs, established reserves, new discoveries and enhanced recovery will all contribute to continuing growth and high returns.

The forest sector is not expected to experience as strong a performance as other resources sectors. Difficult pulp and paper markets are expected to continue for a prolonged period of time as world supply and capacity goes through a period of rationalization. Dimension lumber demand in the United States will continue the strength it has shown for some time as a result of a prolonged construction boom in housing. However, expanding supplies and the continued protection measures against Canadian lumber will limit the opportunities in the sector. Saskatchewan has timber supplies to support some expansion in its lumber production, and it is expected that there will be some growth in the northern region as these supplies become available for harvest.

Thus, sustained strong international demand for potash and uranium will help drive continued export growth. High energy prices will sustain the oil and gas industry at a high level of activity. The agriculture sector will continue to be dependent on crop conditions and world markets, but is expected to make improvements over time. Value-added opportunities will likewise grow and expand, provided that policy is supportive of investment. The technology sector, strongly rooted in supporting the resources and value-added industries, will grow and expand. Housing starts have been high over the past five years, with some recent variability. However, the overall strength of the export sectors, rising incomes and continuing low interest rates will result in the construction industry continuing at a high level of activity over the coming years. Retail sales will be growing in response to rising incomes and the overall strength of the economy.

Employment is also expected to increase at a pace that will push the unemployment rate down and personal income up. Saskatchewan currently experiences one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, with an average annual rate of 5.4% in 2004. This was significantly below the national average of 7.2%. A number of regions have rates of unemployment well below the average, reflecting very tight local and regional labour markets. Employment over the next five years is expected to grow at a pace that will bring a higher proportion of the population into the workforce and further reduce unemployment. Over the coming decade, real wages and salaries will grow as the province competes effectively in work markets and as investment accelerates.

The key macroeconomic indicators for Saskatchewan show general improvement in the provincial economy for 2005 and 2006. Over the longer term, the pace of growth will be among the best in the country. Saskatchewan has become a "have province" and can be expected to retain that status. This reflects the success the province has experienced in becoming a modern economy. The basics of that success are based on an economy that is:

- strong and diversified in resources;
- export driven;
- knowledge based;
- dependent on sophisticated technology and science;
- integrated into high productivity.and high wage world markets; and,
- responsible management in terms of government finances and investment.

The Saskatchewan Centennial Summit, January 2005 provided a major forum for business, labour, community, First Nations and Métis and youth leaders to celebrate Saskatchewan's economic successes and explore our future challenges and opportunities.

On September 21, 2005, the province released a new economic action plan. The *Saskatchewan Action Plan for the Economy* presents a broad vision that builds on the province's strengths and economic momentum to launch the province into a second century of opportunity and prosperity. The Action Plan is an integrated, long-term approach that builds on a decade of economic strategies and partnerships to strengthen and stimulate the provincial economy. It identifies four strategic thrusts including:

- expand and build on our natural strengths;
- extend our successes in research and innovation;
- enhance and promote our competitive advantages; and,
- broaden our economy, workforce and jobs.

The Action Plan is a broad call for action by all of the key participants in the economy. Taken in conjunction with the Centennial Summit, it points to a future based on:

- exports as a primary basis for increased prosperity and wealth creation;
- competitiveness and productivity in order to compete in work markets;
- knowledge and technology as a source of productivity;
- investments in support of value added production across all sectors, particularly in the resources and agricultural sector;
- a highly skilled and trained workforce, meeting industry demands; and,
- a positive investment climate supported by sound and affordable policy.

The essence of this Action Plan is that Saskatchewan's future must be premised on fully engaging in a knowledge-based, high technology, high skilled, high productivity and high wage world economy. This is a sound strategy. There is no future for Saskatchewan as a relatively low skill, low wage, and low productivity region of the world. If Saskatchewan were to follow this route, more and more employment would shift to lower paying service sectors, produced for internal consumption. While services are growing in importance, this would ultimately be unsustainable as a basis for full employment.

Low wage export goods would have to be part of the mix. Other countries can fill the market needs for goods produced under these conditions much more effectively than Saskatchewan. Development of this sort could only mean declining incomes, declining employment and reduced prosperity. The quality of life and high standards of services so essential to the people of the province would inevitably go into long-term decline.

The chosen route is by no means assured, however. The policy framework and investment conditions must be supportive. In order to meet the requirements of the Action Plan, the labour force will need to adapt to changing job markets with relevant training and retraining which is geared to shifts in skill requirements. Young people will need to be well-prepared as globalization, technological change, and a knowledge-based economy fuel an increased demand for high quality education and skills training. Training and skills development will be essential to meeting the demands of the Action Plan. Questions include how large these demands will be, where the new entrants to the labour force will come from as the economy grows and prospers, and how both the new entrants and the existing participants in the workforce will acquire the skills they need on an on-going basis.

3

Saskatchewan Labour Force

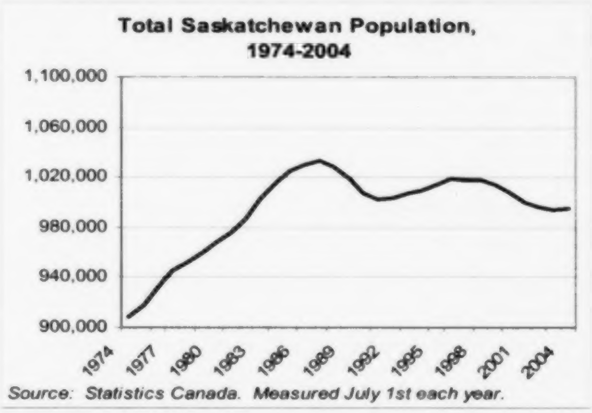
Chapter 3: Saskatchewan Labour Force

3.1 Overview

Saskatchewan's population has hovered around the one million mark for the past two decades. In 2004, the population of Saskatchewan was 995,391, with a nearly equal distribution of men and women.

Saskatchewan's population has increased by nearly 87,000 from 1974 to 2004 (Figure 3.1). Over this thirty year period, the average annual growth rate was 0.3%; however, over the past 10 years, the average the growth rate was -0.1%. Over the past three years, the population has stayed relatively constant, with declining net out-migration helping to stem the decline in population.

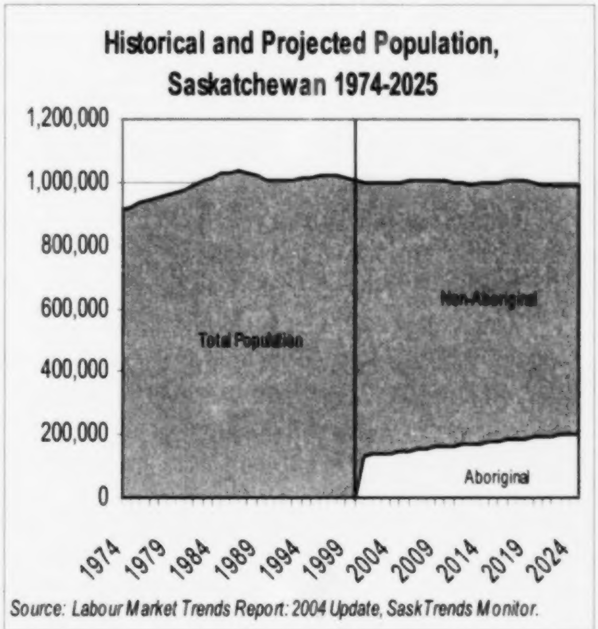
Figure 3.1



Source: Statistics Canada. Measured July 1st each year.

The *Saskatchewan Labour Market Trends: 2004 Update* provides a forecast of the provincial population and labour force over the next 20 years (Figure 3.2). . The population is expected to continue to cycle around the one million mark, but with two noticeable demographic shifts. The first shift is the "baby boomers" moving into the retirement age group, and the second is an increased number of Aboriginal people in the primary working age group (15-64 years of age). The Aboriginal population represented approximately 14% of the provincial population in 2001, and that proportion is expected to increase to 21% by 2025.

Figure 3.2



Source: Labour Market Trends Report: 2004 Update, SaskTrends Monitor.

Note: Consistent data on Aboriginal people not available prior to 2004

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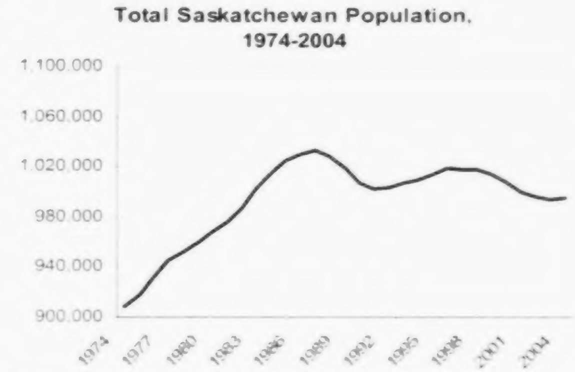

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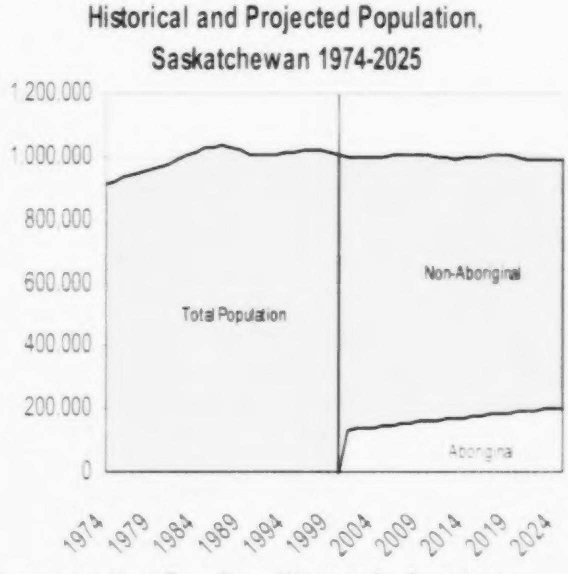


Source: Labour Market Trends Report 2004 Update, SaskTrends Monitor

Note: Consistent data on Aboriginal people not available prior to 2004

- *Structure of the Population*

The structure of the population in Saskatchewan is changing. For instance, Saskatchewan's population is aging. The number of people aged 65 and over increased from 12% (110,864) to 15% (147,451) over the past 25 years (1979 to 2004). The number of people aged 15-24 decreased by 20%, and the total number of people under the age of 25 decreased from 45% of the population to 35%. This trend reflects a decrease in fertility rates, an increase in the average life expectancy, and the effects of inter-provincial migration.

The population continues to shift toward the larger cities. While Saskatchewan has a higher proportion of people living outside its major cities than any other province, the size of the cities continues to grow compared to the rural areas. Most rural regions in modern industrial economies are expected to experience significant population declines. Saskatchewan has always had a relatively large out-migration of people to other provinces. And yet, remarkably, Saskatchewan has a larger rural population than nearby states such as North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming, and is expected to widen the gap with these states over the next few years.

A number of things contribute to the limitations on population growth in rural economies. One is declining birth rates. The birth rate in most parts of Saskatchewan, like most places in the developed world, has now reached the point where the number of children being born is not sufficient to replace those who die. The second is that many young people go to other provinces for education and work and do not return. Similarly, the number of people coming into the province for education and work is lower on a per capita basis because of the attraction of the larger cities and the variety of job opportunities, and in many cases, higher wages that are available in their home provinces. The result is that rural regions typically have a net out-migration of people, particularly among younger and early middle aged adults. Saskatchewan is affected by the same underlying factors.

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the population numbers and projections for rural Saskatchewan. The rural population declined at less than ½% from 1995-2000 and is expected to decline further at somewhat higher rates. However, these projections are based on relatively conservative assumptions; it is entirely possible that the declines will be considerably less due to increased strengths in the resources sectors, increased diversification in keeping with recent policy strategies of the province and strengthened policies to support economic development, including training and retention of the rural workforce.

Figure 3.3

Rural Saskatchewan Population, 2000

Category	Covered population in 2000
RMs that include cities	161,834
RMs that include small cities	46,979
RMs that include large towns	62,030
RMs that include Reserves, small/medium towns/villages	75,056
RMs that include only small/medium towns/villages	208,441
Total rural population	554,340

Source: ACRE, July, 2001

Figure 3.4

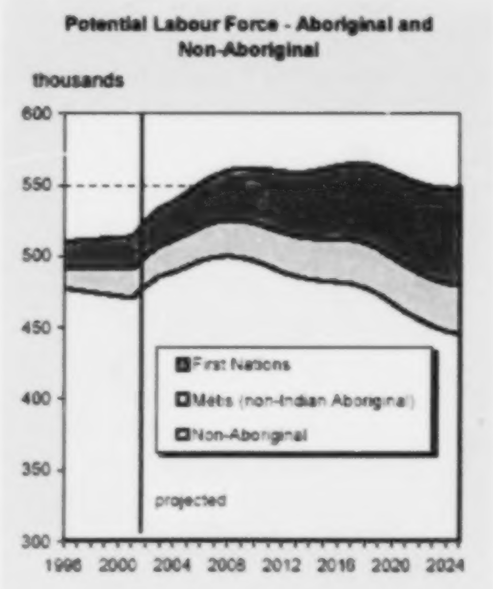
Projected Rural Saskatchewan Population 1990 - 2020

	Actual			Projected			
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total	586,429	564,569	554,340	530,674	507,923	486,902	466,606
Annual growth rate	...	-0.8%	-0.4%	-0.9%	-0.9%	-0.8%	-0.8%

Source: ACRE, July, 2001

Another structural change taking place is the increasing relative size of the northern population relative to the rest of the population. The northern population is relatively small at around 40,000 residents, but these numbers, unlike those for rural Saskatchewan, are expected to grow. This is due not only to the fact that the northern population, is over 90% First Nations and Métis who are not nearly as likely to leave the North and the province as others in the population, but also because of the projected strength in the resources sectors of the North.

Figure 3.5



A further structural change is the increasing First Nations and Métis population, and the large increase in the proportion of the population under the age of 21 who are First Nations and Métis. This will translate into a much larger proportion of the labour force being made up of Aboriginal people. Figure 3.5 shows the projections of the potential labour force which is made up of those 15-65 years of age. Without First Nations and Métis people, the size of the labour force would drop dramatically over the coming years.

However, as the numbers of First Nations and Métis people grow, this impact will be offset. While Aboriginal people today make up about 14% of the overall population, the proportion 14 years and under is now in excess of 26%.

- *Inter-provincial Out-Migration*

Saskatchewan has traditionally had more people move to other provinces each year than come into the province from elsewhere. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the province experienced two recessions and a period of low economic growth. In 1989/90, the province had a net outflow of nearly 20,000 people to other provinces, with nearly half of them being youth ages 15-29. As the economy improved, a reversal of this trend occurred with a significantly lower number of people leaving in the mid-1990s.

Even though the gap significantly closed, more people left the province than came in for every year since that time. People continue to leave the province. The net outflow peaked again in 2001/02 and has been declining since. Most of the movement back and forth for Saskatchewan people takes place within Western Canada. Generally, the movement has been relatively balanced except for the case of Alberta. In 2003/04, for instance, 3,750 more people went to Alberta than came to Saskatchewan from Alberta. This number appears to be growing somewhat and could reach as high as 5,000 in 2004/05. It is reasonable to expect that the imbalance with Alberta will increase as the resource boom and higher wages continue in that province into the foreseeable future.

Not surprisingly, the largest movements of people across provinces occur among younger people and the more highly educated part of the population. Young people both come into the province and leave at a higher rate, with the largest net loss also being in this group. In 2003/04, it is estimated that there was a net loss of 1687 youth, down from 2,132 the previous year. The net loss of university graduates from 1996 to 2001 was about 1,500/year, while the net loss of certificate and diploma graduates was about 1,100/year.

The movement of people back and forth across provincial boundaries is not generally a bad thing. Mobility supports economic change and development, and relatively free movement of people in Canada is a strength of the federation. Concerns arise, however, when the migration leads to a reduction in people needed to support the development of the province. A net loss of people with skills can cause a drain on the pool of people needed to support the development of resource and value-added industries. Also, losses can disproportionately affect certain regions of the province. The loss of people with needed skills from rural areas can re-enforce the constraints on development that the rural areas already face. Thus, labour force development measures need to include measures to discourage net losses in areas where skilled people are needed.

- *Education Levels*

Saskatchewan's population is becoming more educated over time, reflecting a national trend.

Levels of post-secondary education have increased for all age groups over the past decade. Although Saskatchewan remains below the national average in most age groups (with the exception of the 55-64 age cohort), there has been significant progress over the past 10 years (Figure 3.6). Rising educational attainment is partially a reflection of the growing demand for skilled workers.

Figure 3.6

Percentage of Saskatchewan & Canadian Population with Post-Secondary Education

	Canada		Saskatchewan	
	1994	**2004**	**1994**	**2004**
15-24 years	19%	20%	14%	16%
25-44 years	49%	62%	45%	55%
44-54 years	45%	54%	46%	52%
55-64 years	31%	48%	29%	49%
65 years and over	22%	29%	19%	26%
Aged 15+	38%	47%	33%	41%

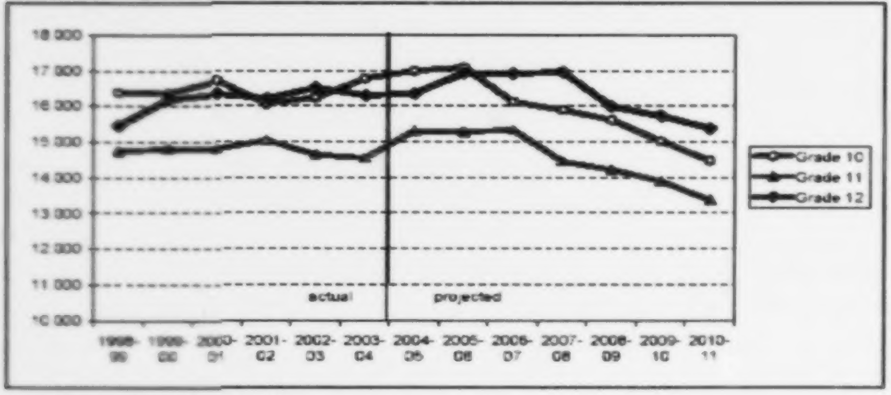
Source: 2004 Historical Labour Force Review, Statistics Canada.

- *School Attendance*

The number of Grade 12 students in Saskatchewan is expected to continue to be relatively stable at about 16,690 until 2007-2008. This is due to the so-called "echo effect" of the children parented by the baby boomers. This actually contributed to a short-term increase in high school students in the middle of this decade. However, a decline is coming in Grade 10, 11 and 12 students, all of which will put pressure on labour markets. The decline in the number of Grade 10 students that start in 2006-2007 translates into a declining number of Grade 12 students two years later. Starting in approximately five years, the number of Grade 12 students will start to decline and, because of demographic trends, will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The following figure illustrates this.

Figure 3.7

Actual and Projected Enrolments, Grades 10 to 12, Saskatchewan



Source: *Sask Trends Monitor*

- *International Migration*

Saskatchewan does not receive as many international migrants as other provinces. In 2003/04, the province's share of the country's net international migration was 0.7%, whereas Saskatchewan made up 3.1% of Canada's population.

Net international migration to Saskatchewan is relatively small and has been stable over various economic conditions. Preliminary estimates for 2003-2004 show an increase in international migration, with a net in-migration of 1,300 people. This number can be expected to increase somewhat with recent policy initiatives to encourage people from other countries to come to Saskatchewan to fill skill shortages.

3.2 Labour Force Developments

Saskatchewan experienced record high employment and labour force participation rates in 2004. Employment gains occurred in manufacturing, service, transportation, construction, agriculture and other primary industries. The province had the third lowest unemployment rate in the country at 5.3%.

The Saskatchewan labour market includes people 15 years of age and older who are in the labour force and are either employed or unemployed and actively seeking work. In 2004, the provincial labour force hit record highs with 507,000 participants and a participation rate of 68.0%. It was higher than the national average of 67.6% and the third consecutive year of increase.

The age composition of the Saskatchewan labour force differs somewhat from the national average. The province has a smaller proportion of its labour force in the 25-44 age group and a larger proportion in the younger age cohort (15-24) and older age cohort (65 and older).

3.3 Projected Labour Force[3]

The provincial labour force is forecast to increase slightly in 2010 to slightly over 540,000 and then to decline quite rapidly to close to 500,000. An underlining assumption of this projection is the continuation of recent patterns in fertility and inter-provincial migration, and little change in participation rates.

A significant change will occur in the age composition of the provincial labour force. In the short-term, there is a projected decline in the proportion of those 30-44 years of age and increases in the other age groups. In the medium to long-term, the proportion of those under 30 years of age and those 45-59 years of age will decline and the proportion of those 30-44 years of age and of those 60 years of age or older will increase. The aging of the labour force is evident in the projected increase in the proportion of those 60 or older from 7% to 11% by 2018, and the decline in the proportion of those under 45 years of age from 63% to 59%.

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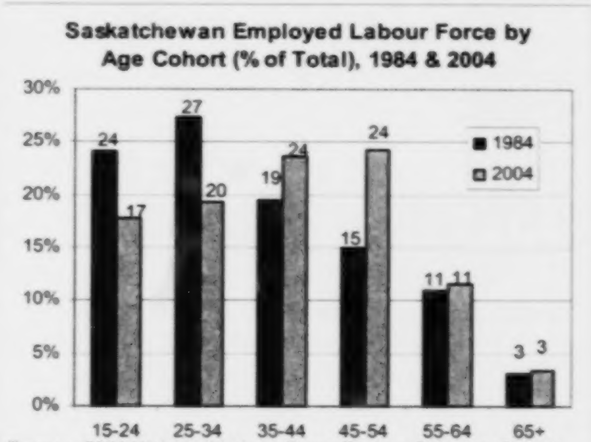
[3] Projections for Saskatchewan's labour force were developed in the *Saskatchewan Labour Market Trends: 2004 Update* report by Sask Trends Monitor.

The other significant change in the labour force is the growing proportion of the Aboriginal population. The non-Aboriginal labour force peaks in 2008 and steadily declines thereafter, while the Aboriginal labour force increases providing a partial offset. The extent of this offset could be much larger if the full potential within the Aboriginal population is realized.

3.4 Employed Labour Force

Figure 3.8


Saskatchewan Employed Labour Force by Age Cohort (% of Total), 1984 & 2004

Source: 2004 Historical Labour Force Review, Statistics Canada.

The employed labour force consists of individuals who work for pay or profit and includes private and public sector employees and the self-employed. In 2004, the Saskatchewan employed labour force consisted of 479,900 people, with 54% being male and 46% female. The demographics of the employed labour force reflect the aging trend in the population (Figure 3.8). The proportion of the employed labour force that is under the age of 35 declined from 51% in 1984 to 37% in 2004 as the baby boomers shifted into the 35-44 and 45-54 age groups.

Saskatchewan's employment rate has increased over the past 20 years from 59.9% in 1984 to 64.4% in 2004. The national rate has increased from 57.7% to 62.7% over the same time period. In 2004, both men and women had employment rates which were higher than the national average.

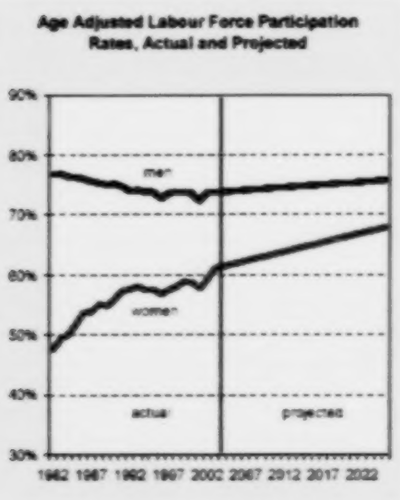
It is to be noted that there have been increased employment rates for all age groups, particularly those 25-64 years of age.

3.5 Participation in the Labour Force

This section draws heavily from the work of Doug Elliot in the Sask Trends Monitor and work he has done for the Department of Learning. One of the factors affecting employment rates is the participation rate for different parts of the population. The participation rate is the proportion of those 15 years and over who are working or actively seeking work. This covers both the employed and those counted as unemployed.

- *Participation of Women*

Figure 3.9



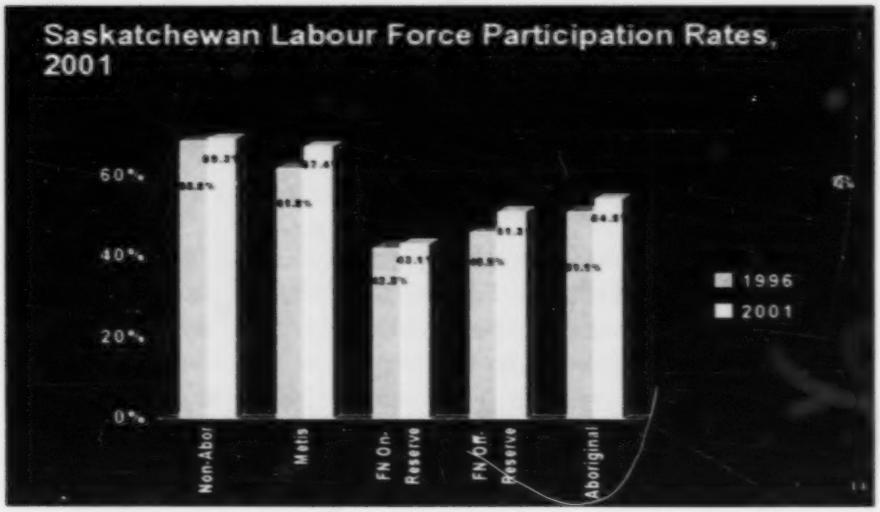
Source: *Sask Trends Monitor*

A factor over the last three or more decades contributing to increased employment has been the rapidly increasing participation rates for women. It can be seen in Figure 3.9 that women's participation has been growing, with slightly more than 60% of working age women active in the labour force, compared to well over 70% for men. Women are expected to continue to participate at increasing rates over the coming years, meaning that support for women's participation will be important in meeting shortfalls in available workers.

- *Labour Market Outcomes for Aboriginal People*

Compared to the non-Aboriginal population the Aboriginal population has relatively low participation rates (Figure 3.10). Although Métis people have roughly comparable participation rates to the rest of the population, First Nations people off-reserve have rates significantly below the overall average, and those on-reserve have the lowest rates.

Figure 3.10



Source: *Saskatchewan Learning*

There is real opportunity to dramatically increase the available labour supply by increasing participation rates of First Nations people. First Nations people already experience unemployment rates of 25% and higher, meaning that many who are willing to work and seeking work cannot find work. There is little hope of increasing the numbers of those seeking work unless there is an incentive to do so. That incentive must come in the form of employment success. This is only possible by ensuring employment.

The Aboriginal youth population (15-29 years of age) is the age group that will have the most significant impact on the Aboriginal labour force. In 2001, an estimated 11% of the youth population in the labour force was Aboriginal. With a growing population and increasing labour force participation rates, the Aboriginal portion of the overall labour force more than doubles to 28% by 2025. This equates to more than one in four new entrants to the labour market being Aboriginal compared with one in 10 new entrants in 2001.

The labour market outcomes for off-reserve Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan have generally improved since the 2001 Census. The employment rate of off-reserve Aboriginal people 15 years and older was 50.7%, an increase of almost two percentage points. Their unemployment rate was 16%, a drop of more than three percentage points and their labour force participation rate remained relatively constant at just over 60%. The labour market outcomes for First Nations people have improved the most within Saskatchewan's off-reserve Aboriginal population, with nearly a six percentage point decline in their unemployment rate, a 4.5 percentage point increase in their employment rate and a two percentage point increase in their participation rate. The employment rate for the Métis population has decreased by 0.6 percentage points since 2001. Their unemployment rate has decreased by 1.7 percentage points, and their participation rate has decreased by two percentage points.

There are still significant differences in the labour market outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the province, although the differences have decreased since 2001. The employment rate gap is the difference between the employment rate for non-Aboriginal people and the employment rate for Aboriginal people. In 2001, the employment rate for non-Aboriginal people was 66% and 48.9% for Aboriginal people, resulting in a 17.1% gap. In 2004-2005, the employment rate gap narrowed by two percentage points to 15%.

Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey data for the off-reserve Aboriginal population indicates that persons with some post-secondary education or less, as well as those with completed post-secondary education, have experienced improved labour market outcomes since 2001. It is readily apparent that increased levels of education positively affect labour market outcomes, as the Aboriginal population with completed post-secondary education more closely resembled the labour market outcomes of the non-Aboriginal population. The gap in the employment, unemployment and participation rates for those with completed post-secondary education have all narrowed by more than three per cent since 2001.

Aboriginal Youth: From 2001 to 2004-2005, off-reserve Aboriginal youth 15-24 years of age have not fared as well in the Saskatchewan labour market as non-Aboriginal youth. Overall, the labour market activity gap has widened due to improved labour market activity for non-Aboriginal youth and less favourable labour market outcomes for Aboriginal youth. The employment rate for non-Aboriginal youth increased by two percentage points, and the unemployment rate declined more than two percentage points (Figure 3.11). For Aboriginal youth, the employment and participation rates declined more than two percentage points, and their unemployment rate increased one percentage point. This has resulted in a widening of the employment gap by 4.4 percentage points, the unemployment rate gap by 3.4 percentage points and the participation rate gap by 2.8 percentage points.

Figure 3.11

Gaps in the Employment Rate, Unemployment Rate and Participation Rate for the Non-Aboriginal and the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Population, 15-24 Years, Saskatchewan, 2004/05 (April/04 to March/05) and 2001 Census Annual Average

Labour Force Characteristic (%)	Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal/Aboriginal Gap		
	2001	2004/05	2001	2004/05	2001	2004/05	Difference (percentage points)
Employment rate	63.3	65.4	37.5	35.2	25.8	30.2	4.4
Unemployment rate	10.8	8.4	23.7	24.7	12.9	16.3	3.4
Participation Rate	71.0	71.4	49.1	46.7	21.9	24.7	2.8

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, Labour Force Survey

Off-reserve First Nations youth have had improved labour market outcomes since 2001, whereas Métis youth have experienced poorer labour market outcomes. The First Nations youth have had higher employment and participation rates and a lower unemployment rate; however, these have been more than offset by the decreased employment and participation rates and increased unemployment rate for Métis youth.

On-reserve Aboriginal youth (15-24 years) have lower levels of labour market attachment. According to 2001 Census data, their employment rate was 10.8%, their unemployment rate was 50.9%, and their participation rate was 22%.

The labour market outcomes for Aboriginal youth in Saskatchewan are lower in comparison to the other three western provinces.

On-Reserve Aboriginal People: Similar information about selected labour force characteristics, such as the employment, unemployment, and participation rates of the on-reserve Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan is not available from the Labour Force Survey. The most recent data on the labour market activity of on-reserve Aboriginal persons can be found in the 2001 Census. In 2001, the on-reserve Aboriginal population aged 15 and over had an employment rate of 29.2%, unemployment rate of 33%, and participation rate of 43.5%.

The employment rate of those aged 25-64 was 40.9%, their unemployment rate was 29.8%, and their participation rate was 58.2%. The data reveal that educational attainment plays an important role in labour market outcomes. In the same age cohort, the employment rate of on-reserve Aboriginal persons with some post-secondary education or less was 32%, their unemployment rate was

34.8%, and their participation rate was 49.3%. On-reserve Aboriginal people with completed post-secondary education had better labour market outcomes. Their employment rate was 60.9%, their unemployment rate was 22.2%, and their participation rate was 79.5%.

Incomes of Aboriginal People: The statistics on comparative incomes of Aboriginal people support the findings that they are not experiencing equal outcomes in terms of labour market activity (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12

Income of First Nations and Metis People, Saskatchewan, 2001

Title	All Aboriginal	First Nations	Metis	Non-Aboriginal
Average FT Employment Income $	30,141	28,324	31,553	35,783
Average PT Employment Income $	12,287	10,232	14,697	16,130
Average Income $	15,961	13,247	20,372	26,914
Median Income $	11,366	9,270	15,130	20,653
% of Income from Employment		60.9	77.6	73.9
% Families Below Poverty	42.6	55.7	29.2	9.1
% Single Individuals 15+ Below Poverty	60.8	70.3	53.5	34.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Census, 2001

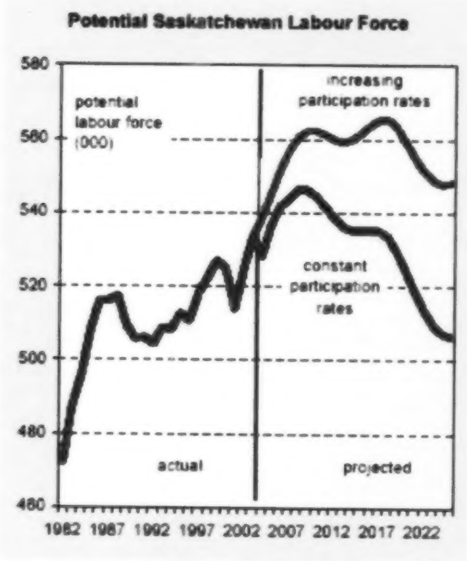
First Nations and Métis people in the province earned incomes in 2001 significantly below the remainder of the population. The average income for all Aboriginal people was $15,961, compared to $26,914 for the rest of the population, which is equivalent to 59%. For First Nations people, income differences are extreme, with the average income $13,247 less than half of than that of the overall population. The differences with respect to employment income impacts are much less dramatic, largely because employment income figures remove the effect of much lower employment - higher unemployment.

Métis people do relatively better than First Nations people. Off-reserve First Nations people (not reported separately in the table) do even worse than First Nations people generally. Indeed, the employment and income status of reserve residents is so unacceptable as to call for unprecedented action. Poverty rates further indicate how badly labour markets have been working as a vehicle for generating and distributing income for Aboriginal people.

The key to success for First Nations and Métis people is increased employment; employment is the key means through which these incredible gaps in income can be closed. Without closing the income gaps, Aboriginal people will continue to be denied the benefits of provincial economic growth and prosperity.

Combined Impact of increased participation by Aboriginal people and by women:
The following Figure 3.13 illustrates the dramatic effects that can be realized by increasing participation rates, for women and First Nations people. The results are represented by the line showing increased participation rates.

Figure 3.13



Source: *Sask Trends Monitor*

These projected increases reflect increased participation of women in the workplace, increased Aboriginal participation, tightening of the labour market and a growing demand for workers due to economic activity. The Aboriginal labour force could increase by 138% over the forecast period due to improved participation rates and population growth, with a notable 200% increase in the First Nations portion from an estimated 23,000 in 2001 to 68,500 by 2025. The Métis portion of the labour force is expected to increase 68%, from an estimated 20,400 in 2001 to 34,200 by 2025.

These results show that simply by drawing on provincial residents, the labour force could increase quite rapidly and reach a relatively stable level at about 560,000 workers. This would go some considerable way to meeting anticipated demands outlined in this report. Saskatchewan is incredibly well-placed to have a large new influx into the labour force at exactly the time it is needed. This however, will not be achieved without a radical change from past patterns. Getting to a labour force of this size on this basis will require a huge effort and a large amount of policy support.

Reaching this level would not meet all of the anticipated demand. There will also be room to absorb increased immigration. Immigration, however, should not take place in such a way as to discourage the increased participation of women and First Nations people.

3.6 Today's Workplace

- *Productivity*

Saskatchewan's positioning in the world economy will demand that productivity be a priority. In the 1990s, Saskatchewan consistently outperformed Canada's labour productivity growth by an average annual rate of 49%. Saskatchewan continued to outperform Canada from 1997-2004, although the gap narrowed to 19%. Most recently (2003-2004), Saskatchewan's labour productivity growth was sixth among the provinces and 7% lower than the national average. Contributing factors to Saskatchewan's declining labour productivity can likely be attributed to below average research and development spending, lower levels of education and training attainment, and declining K-12 outcomes in mathematics and sciences.

- *The Changing Nature of Work*

The changing nature of work has altered the make-up of Saskatchewan's labour force and will continue to do so: employment in the private sector has increased 25% over the past two decades; public employment increased by 7%; and self-employment decreased by 20%. The large decline in the number of people who are self-employed is strongly influenced by the declining number of people in the agricultural industry.

The labour market is that part of the employment process that brings together employees and potential employees and employers. It is extremely complex and, in many important ways, differs from the more commonly known markets for goods and services.

The Panel has heard a number of employers speak of a dramatic shift in how the new generation of workers in their 20s and 30s look upon work compared to their predecessors. A number of presenters suggested that new workers come to the world of work with a different perspective on fairness, respect, challenge, trust, and balance with outside life. This perspective is said to be so common and widespread that it will not be possible for employers who are not supportive of these perspectives to simply look for other workers who do. The shortage of new entrants and the common sharing of these perspectives will mean that is not an option.

Some features of employment standards are beyond the reach of the employer/employee relationship. Conditions of work, hours of work, and the workplace environment are rightfully subject to safety, health and related standards. However, it is suggested that the new generation of working people are bringing with them new expectations in terms of reasonableness and fairness. Expectations about working conditions and the work environment are not immutable in time. They reflect values and beliefs that are shaped by various circumstances which evolve over time.

This profile of attitudes and values about work is not limited to the more highly educated people who have already been challenged by prior learning experiences to expect to be able to think and to be listened to and to be treated with a respect justifying professional credentials. Certainly this group is reported to hold these views and expectations. But a number of employers from construction and other workplaces where substantial parts of the workforce typically have limited or no post-secondary background clearly report they see a similar situation with their workers.

These and other things learned from submissions and reports confirm the importance of linkages and bridges between training and employment. The ability to recruit and retain employees on the one hand, and the ability of workers to find and stay in employment on the other, depends upon a greater connection and understanding on both sides. Workplaces need to change and adapt and become more responsive and supportive of employees. This is a matter of particular importance for mature adult and Aboriginal new entrants.

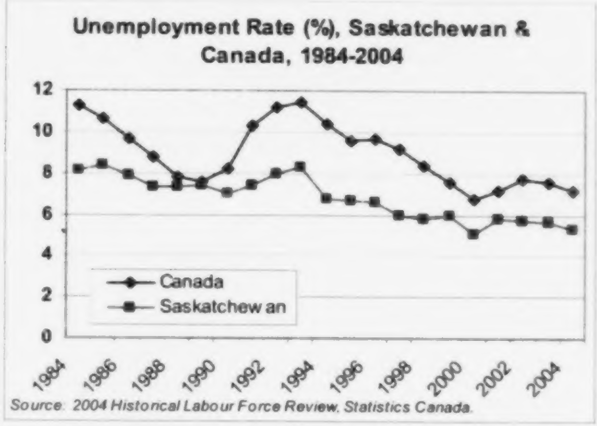
There is considerable evidence which supports the fact that it is possible to prepare people for both the work environment and for the work experience. The Panel has heard frequently that new entrants to the workforce need to have the essential skills needed for successful employment. Essential skills generally include: reading text, document use, writing, numeracy, working with others and cooperative work, continuous learning, oral communication, computer use and thinking skills. The latter include problem solving, decision-making, job task planning and organizing, significant use of memory, and finding information. The Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board has done a lot of developmental work in this regard, and Adult Basic Education now encompasses components that develop and enhance these skills. As part of the continuum of learning experiences, training and support through the development of essentials skills can be critical to overall success.

- *Unemployment*

Saskatchewan's unemployment rate has historically been lower than the national rate, although it tends to follow the national trend. Saskatchewan's low unemployment rate is an indicator of the province's self-regulating environment which is affected by inter-provincial migration and by the high proportion of farmers. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the province was in an economic slowdown, the unemployment rate rose to 8.3%.

As the economy recovered, the unemployment rate began to decline, reaching 5.3% in 2004 (Figure 3.14). This was lower than the national average of 7.2%. The

Figure3.14


Unemployment Rate (%), Saskatchewan & Canada, 1984-2004

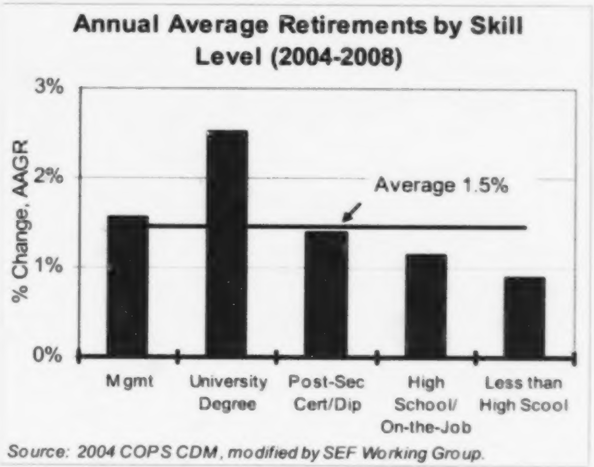
Source: 2004 Historical Labour Force Review, Statistics Canada.

province had 27,000 people unemployed in 2004, with 36% of the unemployed between the ages of 15 and 24.

In the province, youth unemployment has remained relatively stable over the past decade. Traditionally, Saskatchewan's youth population (ages 15-24) has had a lower unemployment rate than the national average. However, within the province youth had the highest unemployment rate among the various age groups. Factors which contribute to a higher youth unemployment rate include: weaker attachment to the labour force, lack of experience and the likelihood of having just completed some form of schooling and looking for permanent work.

- *Job Openings Due to Attrition – Retirements*

Figure 3.15


Annual Average Retirements by Skill Level (2004-2008)

Source: 2004 COPS CDM, modified by SEF Working Group.

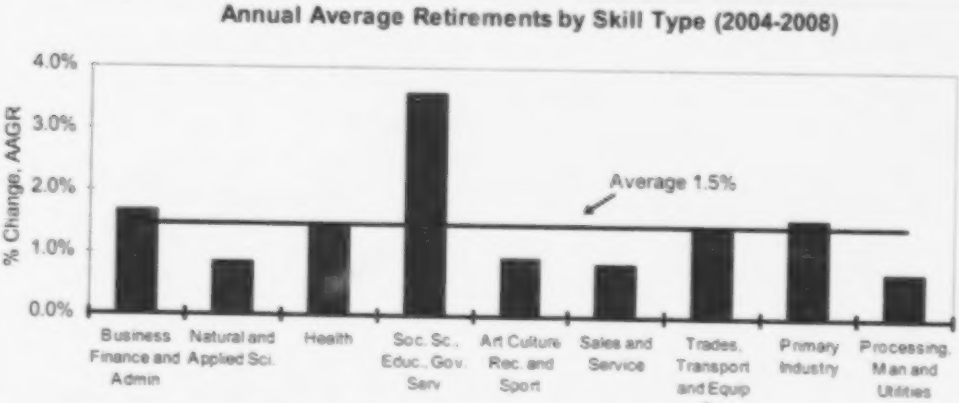
Job openings occur not only when additional jobs are created, but when workers leave the workforce. The increasing numbers of workers leaving the workforce due to aging places an increasing demand for a larger number of new workforce entrants than would be required in the past. This makes meeting labour force demands even more challenging.

Retirement rates vary across occupations depending on the age distribution of the occupation's workforce and the age at which workers in that occupation tend to retire. Over 60% of today's workforce is over 45 years of age, compared to less than 45% in the 1980s. In Saskatchewan, an estimated 36,500 people (or an annual average of 1.5% of the current provincial workforce) are expected to retire over the five year period (2004-2008). Retirements will account for nearly 60% of all total job openings.

Retirement pressures are also expected to be above average for the management occupations (1.6%). Alternatively, retirement pressures are below average for occupations where the workforce tends to be younger, such as occupations that generally require less than high school graduation (Figure 3.15).

A large variation exists between retirement trends across skill types, from a high in social science, education, and government service occupations, to less than 1% of the manufacturing, and sales and service occupations in the province (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16


Annual Average Retirements by Skill Type (2004-2008)

Source: 2004 COPS CDM, modified by SEF Working Group

Retirements are expected to exert the most pressure in the social science, education and government service, business, finance and administration occupations.

Over the next five years, approximately 1.7% of the business, finance and administration workforce is expected to retire annually.

Occupations in manufacturing, processing and utilities (0.7%) followed by occupations in sales and services (0.9%) have the lowest projected retirement rates.

The data provide one perspective on the expected impact of retirements over the coming years. Another indication comes from the statements and plans of employers themselves. Virtually all employers who met with the Panel reported that one of the highest priority challenges expected is dealing with the rapid increase in retirements expected in their workplaces. Nearly all report they have been observing an ever-increasing average age of employees, with a greatly increasing concentration of employees in the 40-55 year age group. Over the next five years, a high proportion of these will retire. Naturally, the actual number will vary from employer to employer.

The result is that employers face a two-fold challenge that is dramatically different from anything they have faced before. The numbers of male non-Aboriginal job candidates is going to drop dramatically at the same time as the number of people leaving their employment increases quickly. Competition will be made even fiercer as a result of economic growth and the strength of labour market demand in high-wage neighbouring economies. This convergence factor is virtually unprecedented in modern labour markets. A "perfect storm" is approaching. The challenge is to prepare for it and make the transition to a new kind of labour market and a transformed employment picture.

3.7 Occupational Employment

Key influences on trends in occupational employment[4] growth (or decline) include: growth in the industries that an occupation is concentrated in; structural or technological factors (e.g., increased office automation such as computers, electronic mail, and voice messaging systems has resulted in declining employment for secretaries and changed the nature of their work); and supply of qualified workers in the occupation (e.g., limited availability of qualified candidates has limited employment growth for some health care occupations).

The following Saskatchewan trends in occupational employment and related educational requirements are based on the National Occupational Classification (NOC) code according to skill level and skill type. Skill level classifies occupations by the level of education or training usually required for a given occupation, and skill type classifies occupations based on the type of work performed. These categories are intended to indicate easily understood segments of the world of work. The following Figure 3.17 provides a description of the four skill levels based on the NOC code.

Figure 3.17

Four Skill Levels based on NOC Codes	
Skill Level A **(university degree)**	♦ University degree
Skill Level B **(post-secondary certificate/diploma)**	♦ Two to three years of post-secondary education at a community college, institute of technology *or* ♦ Two to four years of apprenticeship training *or* ♦ Three to four years of secondary school and more than two years of on-the-job training, training courses or specific work experience *or* ♦ Occupations with supervisory responsibilities *or* ♦ Occupations with significant health and safety responsibilities
Skill Level C **(high school or on-the-job training)**	♦ One to four years of secondary school education *or* ♦ Up to two years of on-the-job training, training courses or specific work experience
Skill Level D **(less than high school graduation)**	♦ Up to two years of secondary school and short work demonstration or on-the-job training

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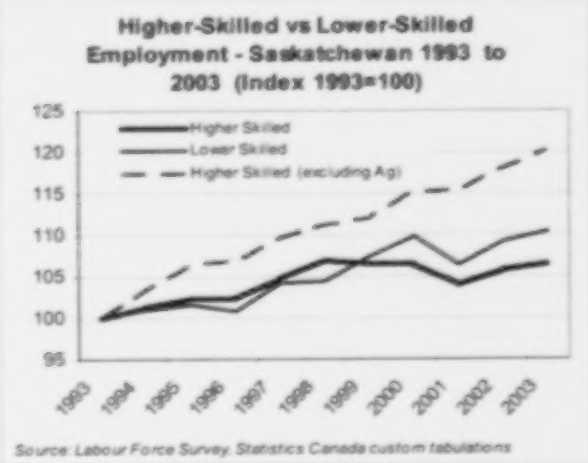
[4] All data in the Occupational Employment section is based on the 2003 Historical Labour Force Review and the COPS Demand Model. Numbers have **not** been adjusted to reflect the rebasing on the Labour Force Survey which occurred in February 2005.

In 2003, 58% of Saskatchewan workers were employed in high skilled occupations and 42% in low skilled jobs. Higher skilled occupations are those occupations that usually require post-secondary education, including university education (skill level A), college education, or apprenticeship training (skill level B), and/or occupations in management. Lower skilled jobs usually require secondary school and/or occupation-specific training (skill level C), or on-the-job training (skill level D). The proportion of new hires in high skill occupations is considerably higher than 58% as trained new hires replace less well trained retirees.

Figure 3.18



Higher-Skilled vs Lower-Skilled Employment - Saskatchewan 1993 to 2003 (Index 1993=100)

Source: Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada custom tabulations

Over the last decade, employment growth in lower-skilled occupations has outpaced growth in higher-skilled occupations, largely due to farmers being included in higher-skilled occupations and growth being constrained by declining agricultural employment. Since 1993, lower-skilled occupations grew at an average annual rate of 1.0% compared to 0.7% for higher-skilled occupations. However, higher skilled occupations, excluding farmers, grew at an annual rate of 1.9% (Figure 3.18). The strongest job growth in the province occurred in occupations requiring post-secondary education. Management occupations and occupations requiring a post-secondary education made up 60% of all jobs in 2003.

Over the past ten years, occupations requiring a university degree grew by 2% annually. Employment in occupations requiring skill training or apprenticeship training (excluding farming) had the highest rate of growth at 2.2% annually.

3.8 Occupational and Skill Outlook (2004 to 2008)

It is difficult to accurately predict how many of what types of jobs will be in demand and when that demand will occur in the future. However, potential areas for future job openings can be speculated based on historical economic and labour market trends and assumptions for expansion demand (i.e., new job creation) and attrition (i.e., retirement, etc.). The employment forecast is generated by econometric models which take into account many variables (e.g., consumption, investment, interest rates, commodity prices, taxes, etc.).

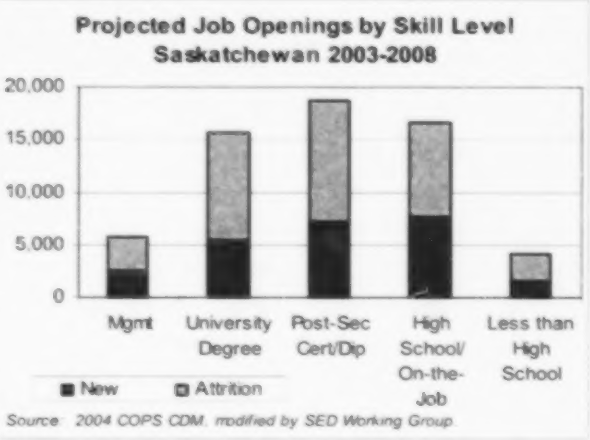
The Canadian Occupational Projection System Demand Model provides a base forecast for occupational trends over the next five years (2004-08), which is then adjusted based on consultations and analysis by a working group.

Expansion demand creates new job openings due to economic activity and is the number of workers needed to produce projected output at a given rate of labour productivity growth. Expansion demand is expected to grow at an annual average rate of one percent over the next five years, creating 24,500 jobs over the 2004-2008 period. *Attrition* creates job openings due to workers permanently leaving the labour force usually due to retirement. There are other reasons for leaving a job (such as discouragement and family responsibilities) that were considered when assessing future outlook. However, they have been excluded from the following analysis. Over the next five years, approximately 36,500 people are expected to retire - 1.5% of the workforce per year.

These projections do not take into consideration the number of workers actually available to fill the demand; therefore, they are only occupational demand projections and not surplus or shortage projections.

Over the next five years, Saskatchewan is projected to have 61,000 job openings or employment opportunities, 40% from new job openings and 60% occurring due to attrition (Figure 3.19). This means that there will be slightly over 15,000 new job openings per year. Two-thirds or more of these will require university degrees or certificates and diplomas provided by the training institutions in the training sector. There will be a requirement for close to 4,000 per year having diplomas or certificates from the latter institutions.

Figure 3.19



Projected Job Openings by Skill Level Saskatchewan 2003-2008

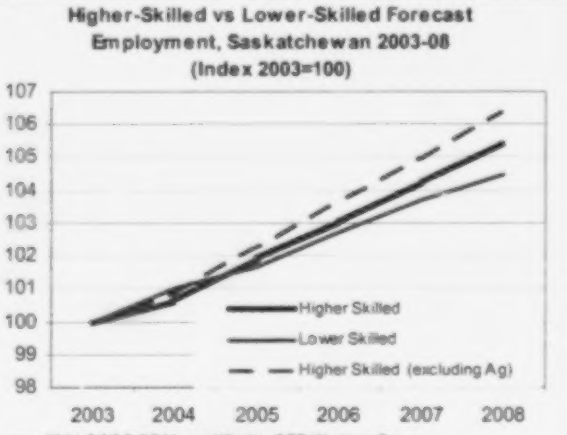
Source: 2004 COPS CDM, modified by SED Working Group

The provincial economy is expected to create an estimated 24,500 new jobs over the next five years at an annual average growth rate of one per cent. This is a stronger growth rate than the previous five years when the average was 0.4% per year. Contributing to the stronger rate of employment growth is an expected slowing rate of decline in agricultural employment.

- *Employment Growth by Skill Level*

  A shift in the skill levels required for occupations can be seen when comparing the 1993-98 period to the forecast period of 2003-08 (Figure 3.20). Multiple factors affect this shift including movement towards a more knowledge-based economy (i.e., a drop in the number of job opportunities that require less than a high school education) and the economic conditions of the period. It is important to note that the education level required by the job is not necessarily the same level as the person currently in the position. These jobs exclude those available due to attrition.

Figure 3.20



Source: 2004 COPS CDM, modified by SEF Working Group.

Skilled workers are expected to remain in high demand over the forecast period. Over the next five years, the fastest growing occupational group will be the higher skilled occupations, excluding agriculture (1.3% per annum). Lower skilled occupations will grow at an annual growth rate of 0.9% over the same time period.

The more highly skilled occupations that generally require a university degree are expected to have the highest rate of employment growth at 1.4% per year over the 2004-2008 period. Management occupations and occupations that generally require a college or technical/vocational education (excluding farmers) are projected to have annual growth rates of 1.2%. Occupational employment that requires only on-the-job training is projected to have the weakest demand with annual growth rates of 0.6%.

- *Employment growth by skill type*

Over the past decade, employment growth has occurred in diverse occupational groups across the province. The occupational grouping to have the largest increase in total share of employment is sales and service. The largest decline has been in primary industry-related occupations (Figure 3.21).

Figure 3.21

Saskatchewan Employment by Skill Type

	AAGR[5]			Share of Employment			
	1994-1998	1999-2003	2004-2008	1993	1998	2003	2008
Total Employment	1.1%	0.4%	1.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Skill Type							
Management Occupations	1.3%	0.0%	1.2%	8.5%	8.5%	8.4%	8.3%
Business, finance and administration	0.4%	0.9%	1.0%	15.7%	15.2%	15.6%	16.3%
Natural and applied sciences	4.2%	2.3%	2.1%	3.0%	3.5%	3.8%	5.2%
Health	1.5%	3.8%	1.8%	6.2%	5.4%	6.4%	6.6%

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[5] AAGR: Annual Average Growth Rate

Social science, education and gov't services	1.3%	4.2%	0.8%	6.1%	6.1%	7.4%	7.6%
Art, culture, recreation and sport	0.2%	2.4%	0.5%	2.1%	2.0%	2.2%	2.6%
Sales and service	1.8%	2.3%	0.7%	23.4%	24.2%	26.6%	25.6%
Trades, transport and equipment operators	3.5%	0.7%	1.3%	12.9%	14.5%	13.7%	13.0%
Primary industry	2.0%	5.9%	0.1%	19.2%	16.4%	11.9%	10.8%
Processing, manufacturing and utilities	8.1%	0.7%	2.2%	2.9%	4.1%	4.1%	4.0%

Source: Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada custom tabulations & 2004 COPS CDM, modified by working group. (For analysis purposes the growth rates have been identified as above, near and below the average annual growth rate)

- *Occupations with above average growth in demand*

Employment growth is expected to be strongest for occupations in processing, manufacturing and utilities, the trades, natural and applied sciences, and health.

Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities benefit from healthy growth in manufacturing and are projected to grow at an annual rate of 2.2%. This assumes recovery in the farm implement machinery sector and meat packing plants resuming historical levels of production with the resolution of the BSE issue. Occupations in natural and applied sciences are expected to have annual growth of 2.1% due to growth in the professional, scientific and technical services, and manufacturing industries. Occupations in health are projected to increase by 1.8% annually with the ageing of the population and increased federal funding benefiting special care homes in particular.

- *Occupations with near average growth in demand*

Occupations expected to have more moderate employment growth include transport and equipment operations, business, finance and administration, and social science, education and government service occupations.

Occupations in trades and transport and equipment operations are projected to grow at an annual rate of 1.3% based on the outlook for the construction and transportation industries. Employment in business and finance and administration occupations is projected to grow at the provincial average of 1.0% as slower growth in the finance, insurance, real estate and leasing industry is partially offset by strong growth in the professional, scientific and technical services industry. Social science, education and government services occupations are projected to grow at 0.8%, just under the provincial average with no increase in public administration employment and slowing education employment in the K-12 sector.

- *Occupations with below average growth in demand*

  Occupations expected to have below average employment growth, although not necessarily low employment gains, include the sales and service, arts, culture, recreation and sport, and some occupations unique to primary industry.
  Sales and service occupations are expected to register the largest employment gains over the five-year period (2004-2008) with an estimated 4,400 new jobs, although the growth rate is expected to be below average at 0.7%. Stronger employment growth is expected in the more skilled sales and service occupations, such as sales and service supervisors compared to lower skilled sales and service occupations that require a high school diploma or on-the-job training. A weak outlook for the information, culture and recreation industry will result in weak employment growth of 0.5% in arts, culture, recreation and sport occupations. Occupations unique to primary industry are expected to have the lowest growth, with an annual growth rate of only 0.1% due to continued, but slowing declines in agricultural employment.

3.9 Post-Secondary Education and Training

The following Figure 3.22, shows the educational attainment levels of the Saskatchewan labour force. It shows that by the far the largest proportion of those with post-secondary education and training has diplomas and certificates which come from the training system. The training system is the biggest single institutional contributor to the labour force. The proportion with certificates and diplomas is also increasing slightly.

Figure 3.22

	1999 Baseline	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
High school graduate	22.5%	23.7%	24.0%	24.4%	23.5%	24.3%
Some post-secondary education	10.5%	10.3%	9.5%	9.3%	9.4%	9.8%
Certificate or diploma graduate	30.0%	30.1%	31.8%	31.9%	33.9%	32.7%
University degree graduate	13.6%	14.2%	14.3%	14.9%	14.9%	15.3%

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review 2004. Please note all historical data was revised in February 2005 based on the 2001 Census.

A recent study undertaken on behalf of the Panel has provided some further important insights into the educational characteristics of the workforce in the province. Some of the results are outlined below.

In 2004, 71% of Saskatchewan adults had at least a Grade 12 education and 42% are post-secondary graduates. Women have higher levels of completed education than men. Saskatchewan residents 25-64 years of age are as likely as those in other provinces to have a Grade 12 education, but are less likely to be post-secondary graduates. The same is true for those who are employed. The completed education level of both the provincial population and those in the labour force is growing steadily, but there is a persistent gap between Saskatchewan and Canada in the proportion of the labour force that has a post-secondary education.

More than one half of those 25-64 years of age with less than grade nine are employed, but the chances of being employed rise steadily with the level of completed education. This is true for both men and women and across all age groups.

Education levels vary substantially by industry and occupation. The highest levels of completed education are in industry groups dominated by the public sector; the lowest are in the transportation industry and accommodation/food services.

Post-secondary graduates, compared with those with lower levels of education are more likely to be continuing their education. They are also less likely to be self-employed, which may or may not be related.

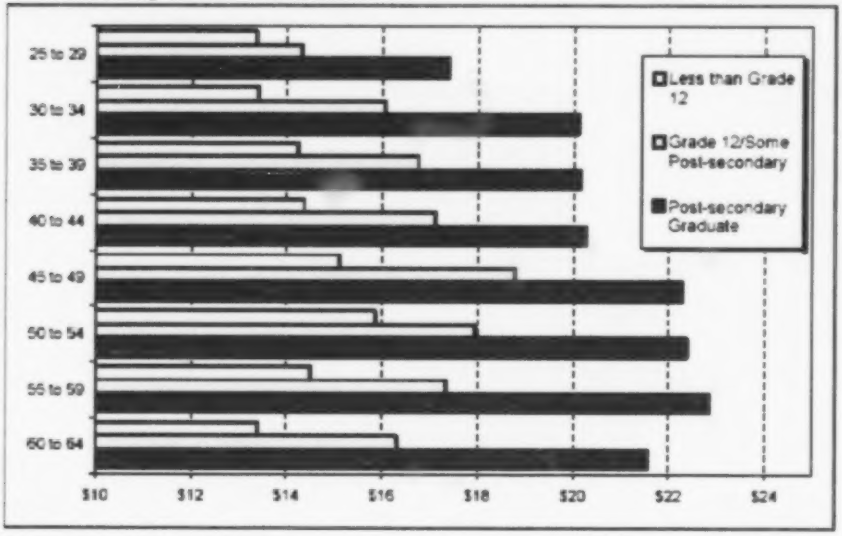
The level of education in the province is steadily increasing through time. In 2004, 56% of those employed, as compared to the population as a whole, in the 15-64 age group were post-secondary graduates, compared with 40% in 1990. There is still a persistent gap between Saskatchewan and Canada as a whole: in 2004, 61% of employed Canadians were post-secondary graduates compared with 56% of employed Saskatchewanians.

These trends can be used to calculate a rough estimate of the number of graduates needed in the province over the short-term. In the 25-64 age group, the proportion of the people employed that have a post-secondary education is increasing in a linear fashion: since 1990, the increase has averaged 1.2% per year. With employment among those 25-64 years of age at 379,000 in 2004, a 1.2% increase would translate into 4,500 new graduates per year simply to maintain the current upward trend. If Saskatchewan wishes to close the gap with Canada, a further 19,000 employed graduates will be required. These numbers simply deal with the "catch-up" requirement associated with getting to a position of comparability with the rest of the country in terms of graduates. The demand created by attrition and population growth is a separate and additional part of what is needed to meet labour market needs (Sask Trends Monitor 2005).

Education and training will be important for people to be qualified for many of the jobs that will become available in the provincial economy over the next few years. It has already been indicated that two-thirds or more of the job openings will demand a certificate, diploma or degree. A question worth asking is whether the labour market rewards those who pursue such training through higher earnings and whether the additional earnings are significant. The following figure throws some light on this question. It shows the differences in average hourly earning by age group for all occupations based on completed education (Figure 3.23).

Figure 3.23

Average Hourly Earnings by Age Group and Completed Education, Paid Workers 25 to 64 Years of Age, Saskatchewan, 2004



Source: Sask Trends Monitor

In all age groups, the amount earned by those with certificates, diplomas, and degrees exceed that earned by those who do not have such qualifications by quite a wide margin. The differences tend to become larger after 30 years of age, suggesting that advanced training and education tends to strengthen the additional earnings realized with experience.

The type of secondary or post-secondary education makes a difference in earnings. Average hourly wage rates (available for paid employees only and excluding the self-employed) by level of completed education and gender show that average wage rates are much higher among post-secondary graduates than among those with grade 12 or less. There is a further increase when the post-secondary education is a university degree, particularly a post-graduate degree Labour Force Supply Data Base, Sask. Trends Monitor, 2005. A recent study, commissioned by SIAST and undertaken by CCBenefits, Inc., measured the socio-economic contributions to students and the economy from technical training. The results show that graduates enjoy a 12.9% rate of return on their investment, including forgone wages while in school, and can expect to recoup their investment in 11 years. This means the benefits from every $1,000 invested in technical training by students generates a benefit four times that amount to the student. The benefits to employers and society generally are over and above this, and are quite considerable (SIAST Business Plan, 2005).

The general conclusion to be drawn from this is that training and post-secondary education does benefit the graduate and not just the needs of employers and industries. Investments in training clearly do pay off handsomely. The challenge is to make the right investments at the right time in the right place.

3.10 Overall Labour Market Pressures

Labour market pressures will be greatest for those occupational groups that are expected to have above average retirement rates. At the top of this list are occupations in social science, education and government services followed by occupations in trades, transport and equipment operations. Health occupations are also facing labour market pressures that are caused by several factors, including current occupational shortages, aging of the existing population and the increasing health demands of an aging population.

Labour market pressures are expected to be the weakest in sales and services and in the primary sector occupations. However, in the resource sectors, labour market shortages regionally are expected. Excess labour market supply, especially in lower skilled occupations, reduces market pressures and declining employment in agriculture, and limits job openings in some parts of the primary sector. Many mining companies are expecting significant shortages, particularly in the trades over the next few years. As well, the oil and gas sector is already facing challenges finding sufficient employees to participate in exploration and development operations.

- *Demographic Changes*

  The population of Saskatchewan is expected to remain at about one million residents for the foreseeable future. However, the demographic mix of the population is changing. Changes are occurring at both ends of the life cycle as well as the overall population. The number of young people coming of working age will drop over the next three to five years as the children of the baby boomers (the echo) move into adulthood, and as the much smaller post-baby boom children families dominate the school population. This pattern is true for all sub segments of the population except Aboriginal people.

  Overall, changes in demographics are going to cause significant pressures and create some very important challenges. As the province experiences increasing numbers of retirements and increased rates of growth, the training system will be confronted with providing new/renewed trained workers for the labour force. This will be followed by a drop in the number of non-Aboriginal young people of working age and an increase in Aboriginal youth reaching the same age. With current institutions functioning at or near capacity, new and innovative strategies will need to be implemented to ensure there are skilled workers to support the province's economy.

- *Meeting Labour Force Needs*

  The knowledge economy is creating changes within the labour force. Individual workers need both transferable workplace essential skills and technical skills. Many jobs now require higher levels of education and training, and there are fewer jobs which require less than a Grade 12 education. As mentioned earlier, it is estimated that two thirds of the new openings in the labour market over the coming years will require post-secondary education and training. Today less than 50% of the workforce has some kind of post-secondary graduation.

As increasing numbers of individuals in the current workforce retire and as the economy grows and develops, Saskatchewan will face serious labour force shortages. The training system will be called upon to respond by increasing the capacity of its current programs and institutions and ensuring training is both relevant and accessible to students and industry. The current number of graduates from SIAST sponsored programs will not be sufficient to meet the demand that is developing due to the convergence of factors.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB, Saskatchewan) has completed an excellent 2005 survey on the shortage of qualified labour and training among Saskatchewan small business owners. The Panel thanks the CFIB for meeting with them and for sharing the results of the survey. The survey found that 54.6% of its members rated a shortage of qualified labour as a priority issue in the province compared to only 21.5% who consider availability of financing to be a priority issue. This percentage has increased over 20 percentage points since 2000 when 33.5% considered labour shortages to be a priority issue. Over 75% of manufacturers, two thirds of the construction industry, and 50% or more of all sectors except business services and finance rate the issue as high priority. By far the greatest reason for hiring difficulties is the lack of a candidate with the required education/experience/skill set in the local area. Fifty-two percent of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the colleges and institutes in the public training system, and 10% were very satisfied. Most business owners surveyed provide some training themselves (91%), a majority are spending more than they were three years ago, and 46% expect to increase training in the future.

The Panel has attempted to make some estimates of how many graduates of the public training system will be required given the expected changes in the labour market. It is clear that an increase in the availability of skilled and qualified workers is extremely important for the well-being of the province. We are convinced that more apprentices are needed to meet the upcoming shortage of trades people with journeyperson status. It has not proved possible to estimate an exact number, but the Panel estimates that the current estimate of approximately 2,500 apprentices per year in SIAST programs must increase to 3,500 or more. More certificate and diploma graduates in the technical areas will be needed as well. When all the converging factors are taken into account, the current number of graduates needs to increase by 30% or more. These numbers could be even higher if the out-migration of skilled workers accelerates.

Immigration as a way to increase the supply of skilled workers is a route that Saskatchewan and Canada have followed in the past and is an option that must be considered for the future. However, over the past half century, Saskatchewan has been a relatively small recipient of skilled immigrants other than in the medical professions. The federal and provincial governments have been working cooperatively to increase the number of immigrants into the province to meet some of the most pressing and urgent needs.

Immigration programs and policies are beyond the mandate of the Panel. However, potential immigration will have some impact on expectations for the training system. Higher immigration could reduce the amount of training needed for technical occupations, but it could also increase demands for certain forms of literacy and language training, as well as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessments.

The Panel has had many discussions about the prospects for immigration in meeting skill needs. While some see immigration as addressing some very specific needs, the vast majority do not believe that it is either wise or realistic to depend to a very great extent on immigration. The efforts of the two governments are expected to achieve some results. However, most agree that the province must first make every effort to increase the preparation and employment of provincial population in training and work. The Saskatchewan problem is that while there is a stable population of working age people over the coming years, participation and employment rates will fall if something is not done to reverse current trends.

There are other reasons for being skeptical about the ability of immigration to solve the coming labour supply problems. Most of the western European countries are facing the same expected shortfall in skilled labour as Saskatchewan. This means not only that they do not offer a source of workers, but also that they will be competing vigorously for the available migrant supplies in the world. So too will the other provinces. No one needs to be reminded of the voracious appetite of the Alberta labour market. Saskatchewan is unfortunately not the most attractive location for many of the new immigrant populations who prefer the larger more cosmopolitan areas with already large populations of people of the same ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It is thus unlikely that immigration will ever address a major part of Saskatchewan's needs for skilled and trained workers.

The training system will inevitably have to carry a major load. It must implement learner-centered strategies which maximize the academic and personal success of individuals within the training system's programs and services. Only with a successful training system will the social and economic needs of the province be met. The most important factor in ensuring a skilled labour force will be mobilizing sufficient people to participate in training in keeping with needs and demands. The next decade will see an unprecedented need to increase the rates of participation in training generally and especially from those parts of the population who have not participated at levels comparable to the population in general. The largest population groups in this category are the First Nations and the Métis populations. The First Nations and Métis people are going to make up 20% of the potential new entrants to the training system over the next few years, and this number will grow to a higher level as time progresses.

The success of the Saskatchewan economy in meeting its needs for able and skilled workers will depend to a very marked degree on it success on mobilizing the First Nations and Métis people, and particularly the young. It is no exaggeration to say that all of the hopes and expectations expressed at the Centennial Summit and in the province's economic Action Plan depend heavily on this.

The First Nations and Métis people are also the part of the population with the greatest need. The income situation of Aboriginal people shows this very clearly. The very best way to generate higher and more equal incomes is through employment and the evidence is clear that training pays off for those who participate. For far too long the Aboriginal people of the province have not had a fair share of the prosperity that the province has experienced. The poverty of the Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan and Canada is directly attributable to their exclusion from full participation in the economy. This must be remedied.

The simplest and most direct way to change this unacceptable situation is to ensure that Aboriginal people become part of the skilled labour force in the province, and to ensure that they share the employment benefits that go with acquiring skills. Training is key to achieving that objective. But training alone will not do the job. There must also be an emphasis on linking training to employment and in preparing workplaces for successful work experiences.

- *Rural and Northern Needs*

The population of the rural areas of the province will continue to decline as the number of young people decline in absolute numbers and as out-migration continues. The North is unique in that it has a growing youth population which shows a strong preference for remaining in their home communities. These are also the areas of the province that will experience the greatest shortage of skilled workers in many categories. The Panel has heard from a large number of rural based employers who consider worker recruitment and retention to be the single largest challenge they face in the future. This includes virtually all who employ journeypersons and apprentices. It also includes large employers such as federated co-ops, the credit unions, the potash mines and farm machinery manufacturers. One of the challenges will be to find ways that rural residents, youth in particular, will be able to learn new skills and update existing skills while they remain part of the rural and northern workforces. In addition, it will be necessary to encourage others to come to the rural areas to work and to continue to improve their skills over time. The training system will continue to be challenged to use alternative types of program delivery so that learning is geographically and financially accessible in rural and northern locations.

3.11 Bridging to Employment

It is evident from the above review of the labour market and the workforce that many things will be needed if labour demands are to be met. Employed workers will require new skills as time passes. More young people must be encouraged to take training leading to skilled work. In order to achieve this, the labour force and the training system will have to become more inclusive and embrace those who have not participated to the extent of others. This includes women and in particular Aboriginal people and Aboriginal youth. As well, the rate of successful completion of training programs must be increased and more people who take training must achieve success in the workplace.

In the preceding text, the Panel has referred to the new values surrounding work and the new kind of workplaces that are developing. These new workplaces have a number of important features that are worth noting. They recognize the differing backgrounds of people and provide support needed for people to succeed. They provide flexibility in employment so that people facing challenges adjusting to work routines and workplace dynamics have a chance to develop and integrate in a supportive environment. The modern progressive workplace that is looking ahead devotes time and energy to preparing the workplace and the work environment for the workforce of the future. A diverse workforce is made to feel welcome and respected. Efforts are made to support a diverse workforce by supporting the goal of a representative workforce and the measures to get to a representative workforce. Possible sources of conflict and differences are addressed in positive ways that help people understand and accept the experiences of others.

To be effective, the successful employer must recognize that incentives are needed to encourage people to prepare for work through training. Training is a costly undertaking for people, young and old, and there must be a conviction that it will be worth it if people are going to commit. Perhaps the most important incentive is certainty that training will lead to a job that rewards the learner for taking the training. People, and particularly young people, need to know that training will lead to work and be able to observe through experience that this is so, rather than just being told.

The historical record shows that the experience of Aboriginal people in getting and keeping stable employment in the past has not been a good one. People who come from communities where there is little knowledge or conviction that training will be rewarded with good stable jobs are hesitant to commit to training. Considerable academic research supports this conclusion. A cycle based on previous bad experiences, for whatever reason, discourages good decisions.

The solution to this, in part, is bridging. Bridging takes place any time that there are active efforts to link - in a supportive way - recruitment, career support, training, education, and employment. It involves seeing the training system as part of a larger employment system where positive action in one re-enforces positive action in the other, and vice versa. Bridging can take many forms - through programs and services of government, by employers working in partnerships with the training system, and by employers reaching into communities to identify and provide continuing support, encouragement, and commitments to young people about to enter the workforce.

It is because of the importance of workplace preparation and bridging that the Panel is so enthusiastic in its support of the various representative workforce initiatives that it has had presented to it in its meetings and discussions. These initiatives have in most cases been supported by the Representative Workforce Initiative of the Government of Saskatchewan, and The Provincial Aboriginal Representative Workforce Council. The Panel very much appreciated the submission made to it by Mr. Wayne McKenzie, who has been a powerful force driving this initiative.

This approach is based on employers preparing their workplaces to break down barriers so Aboriginal employees can achieve success. This approach is about a new workplace that acknowledges, understands, and addresses the diversity of values, experiences and backgrounds of the workforce that will be important to success. Its goal is to have workplaces that are accessible and available to Aboriginal people. This initiative should be a high priority policy. Not only does it address the real obstacles and barriers that Aboriginal people face, but it will help to send the message that training leads to sustainable employment. This would be an important incentive to young people to commit to training leading to employment.

The Panel has had presentations from many employers and employer organizations who are preparing for this new future by making radical changes in their internal human resources practices, including:

- many who once drew heavily on part-time and temporary workers are shifting to full-time and permanent employment;
- credentialism is being progressively modified toward hiring and promotion based on competencies;
- career planning is undertaken for employees, and training plans are put in place based on work needs and career plans;
- training is available on a continuous basis, much of it by the employer or with the support of the employer;
- learning and career development is supported as a lifelong process in which learning is provided on a flexible basis in forms and durations that meet the life and work imperative of the employee. The public training system is drawn upon for some training needs, where suitable and appropriate. However, responsibility for training has been assumed by the employer and much of it is done at the workplace and in the community; and,
- progress is evaluated and supported on an ongoing basis, and supervisors are evaluated on the basis of the support they provide to employees to realize their goals.

We encountered many notable examples of these new approaches, including Conexus, Federated Co-ops Inc., and Cameco. They all emphasized new challenges in recruiting, retaining and training employees in rural and northern Saskatchewan, and suggested that these new approaches will be essential for all successful employers in the future.

3.12 Recommendations

Saskatchewan is soon to enter a period of dramatic labour market changes compared to the past. Future rates of job growth will increase markedly due to new investment and economic growth. Trained skilled workers will be required for an ever-increasing number of jobs in the high technology, knowledge based export sectors. Health care and other service sectors will also have an increased rate of growth in demand for workers. So too will the trades, the resources sectors, and value added manufacturing and processing. Increased retirement will place pressure on employers as the workforce ages. So too will strong competition from Alberta and other provinces for workers. New entrants to the workforce will decline unless the participation rates of First Nations and Métis people increase markedly. Increased participation of women will also be needed.

The result will be a rapidly developing shift in the worker supply and demand balance. Unless measures are taken, some sectors and some occupations will experience substantial shortages of available workers, while others will not. The sectors and occupations experiencing the greatest shortages will be those requiring certified technical skills and training of the kind offered by the Regional Colleges, SIAST, DTI, SIIT, and the SATCC. Over two-thirds of the new job openings each year are expected to require at least a degree, diploma, or certificate, or equivalent. It is estimated that an increase of over 30% in technical certificate and diploma graduates per year will be required in five years time, depending upon assumptions about out-migration, adult up-grading to certificate and diploma level, and growth. The same kind of increases can be expected to be required of work based training, including apprenticeship training, adult basic education (including literacy) and essential skills training. This will require an exceptional degree of effort and organization on the part of the training system and employers.

It is clear that skilled labour shortages can be expected to be part of both the national and provincial economy for a number of years in the future. However, Saskatchewan has advantages that others do not. There is room to increase the numbers of women working. Most significantly, Saskatchewan has a young and growing Aboriginal population that Doug Elliot of Sask Trends Monitor has referred to as a strategic advantage to help replace the province's aging workers.

And, of course, the right policies will be needed to support these developments. As Saskatchewan Learning Minister Andrew Thomson has stated:

> "Providing all youth, particularly Aboriginal youth, with education, training and employment opportunities and actively hiring and recruiting skilled

workers from outside the province will position us to better respond to future skill shortages."

The Panel recommends:

1. **The training system manage a minimum participation rate increase of 30% in training programs and Adult Basic Education (ABE) over the next five years (based on 2004-2005 rates), and that:**
    - **priority be placed on increased participation and graduation/completion of First Nations and Métis people;**
    - **increased participation of women in non-traditional programs and trades be supported; and,**
    - **the risks of reduced participation of young non-Aboriginal males, due to declining numbers in the population, be recognized.**

2. **Successful employment be emphasized as a required measure of success within the existing and additional training efforts.**

3. **The initiative of the provincial government to attract out of province workers to meet immediate skill shortages be continued, provided that a priority is placed on meeting future needs as much as possible from the provincial population.**

4. **The training system support and encourage development of positive and progressive workplaces by working in partnerships with communities and employers to:**
    - **implement employment practices and workplace changes to support representative workforces within government and among all major employers, in keeping with the representative workforce initiative and the work of the Provincial Aboriginal Representative Workforce Council;**
    - **develop and implement strategies to mobilize and retain needed new entrants to the workforce; and,**
    - **pursue new workplace models to strengthen the recruitment and retention of new workforce entrants.**

5. **SIAST, the Regional Colleges, SATCC and the department immediately implement strategies to significantly increase the number of Aboriginal faculty and staff.**

TRAINING SYSTEM REVIEW

4

Vision, Goals and Direction for the System

Chapter 4: Vision, Goals and Direction for the System

4.1 Introduction

The training system in Saskatchewan is, in many ways, unique. Other provinces have systems which undertake to achieve many of the same goals, but none have the same configuration as the Saskatchewan system, and none are rooted as firmly in the same underlying principles.

This uniqueness is, in part, related to institutional structure. However, of greater importance is the clear emphasis on serving the needs of learners and of employers. While learners are recognized as important in institutions in other jurisdictions, the Saskatchewan model reaches out to and accommodates learners to an unequalled extent. And, while employers and employment are recognized in other systems, employers are understood to actually be a part of the system in this province. The dual focus on learners and employment is embedded into the Saskatchewan system to an extent and in a manner that simply cannot be found elsewhere.

The Saskatchewan training model is fundamentally rooted in Saskatchewan values and Saskatchewan inventiveness. Its unique focus on learners has developed through a recognition that a wide diversity of learners in many and varied settings must be served if the system is to provide universal and equal access. The principles of universality and equality are, of course, fundamental Saskatchewan values, and have been since the founding of the province. These values contribute to the special character of the province in a wide variety of ways and are the basis for much of what the government does in serving citizens.

In the training system, realizing the principles of universal and equal access creates a considerable number of challenges for all of those involved. As a practical matter, the focus on learners has helped to shape all aspects of the system, from its vision through to its basic institutional architecture, through to its program philosophy and framework and approaches to delivery. Learners differ in so many ways. They differ by age, by place of residence, by state of knowledge and skill development, by aptitudes and interests, by family status and responsibilities, by wealth and income, to name just a few. This, in turn, means that their needs differ greatly, as does their capacity to take advantage of programs and services based on standardization and uniformity. The very diversity of the province combined with a commitment to equal and universal access have made it imperative that programs be flexible and adaptable to meet leaner needs.

The emphasis on the learner owes much to innovations in the system during the 1970s. This was a period of fundamental rethinking about the training system in the province and about what was needed to address the issues of access. Up until that time, the fixed location, centralized facility model was the dominant approach in developing trade and technical skills. The trainee or student was expected to be young and mobile, a recent school leaver, male, and non-academically inclined. Training was understood to be largely a preparatory step prior to entering the workforce, and to be needed by a small fraction of young people who would enter the trades and a few other quite technical occupations.

This approach to training reflected the model of large scale industrial production that was dominant for a good part of the twentieth century. In industrial production, the focus was on standardization of product to achieve uniformity and production in centrally located large scale plants to realize cost efficiencies. In the training system, the primary concerns were similarly ones of maintaining standards and minimizing costs. Programs were largely geared to apprenticeable trades and pre-employment trades and technical fields with standardized curricula and rigid instructional approaches. In Saskatchewan, the system was dominated by large facilities centered in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon for most of the early period and later expanded to include Regina and Prince Albert.

The changes in the 1970s recognized that the fixed location, campus model based on the above-stated assumptions could not serve the needs of many learners in the province. The government of the day commissioned Dr. Don Faris to review the system and make recommendations on its future direction.

The Faris Report represented a watershed in the development of the future training system. A new and broad vision was set out for adult training in the province. That vision was based on a number of principles, including lifelong learning, responsiveness to learners and communities, decentralization, learner and career support, and efficiency in the use of resources. These principles, adapted for changing circumstances and conditions, remain and continue to inform the system and its directions and management.

4.2 The Evolving Context

Notwithstanding the continuing relevance of the Faris report, much has changed since that time. Economic and labour market conditions have changed dramatically. As such a recapping of some of the key points is important to understand the challenges.

Today, a looming labour market shortage in many skilled areas creates a challenge never before faced. The workforce is aging rapidly, and the number of new entrants will be well below the number of new entrants unless something dramatic happens.

The economy has changed as well. The number of people whose occupation is farming is much fewer than in the past. The need for highly developed knowledge and skills has become much more important than it was. This is becoming ever more pressing as the economy shifts to new export producing industries that must compete with the most competitive and high tech parts of the world. Also, as established industries utilize ever more complex production processes, they require the application of scientific and technological knowledge of increasing sophistication. Therefore, Saskatchewan must compete in a high tech, knowledge based, high wage world if its standard of living and quality of life are to be sustained. This requires that competitiveness and productivity be priorities on the policy agenda. The most important policy measures to increase productivity involve education, training and technology. Both education and training are required to make the adoption and application of technology successful, with training in technical skills being of foremost importance.

Productivity can no longer be treated as being important solely to individual enterprises. Saskatchewan's overall ability to sustain its quality and standard of living will depend on whether industries and sectors as a whole are able to become ever more competitive. The most important single factor determining whether this will be the case will be whether technology, knowledge, and skills throughout the economy are maintained at a world class level. The standard is set by global competitors in the modern economy. Technology and knowledge can be generated elsewhere and imported into the province to quite a considerable degree. This is not the case with respect to skills of the workforce, however, the largest part of a skilled workforce must come from within which inevitably requires education and training.

The growing complexity of knowledge and skills required is integrally connected to a continuing rapid advancement in the content of the knowledge and skills. The speed and rapidity of change in knowledge, technology, and skills has made it imperative that working people constantly renew and up-date their ability to use and apply them effectively. This is true even for people who remain in the same occupations and with the same employers.

It is also the case that employment and career changes have become much more frequent than they once were. These factors, plus the desire of an educated population to remain current, have meant that lifelong and continuous learning has become essential to success. The vast majority of people today partake of regular formal and informal training in order to improve skills and knowledge related to work. There is also an imperative to continuously learn and develop the ability to work in more complex and sophisticated workplaces, requiring computational and cognitive literacy, reading and comprehension, team work and co-operation, problem solving and critical thinking, applied technology, and interpersonal skills and abilities. These skills and abilities are required in virtually all work settings in a modern competitive economy, and the development of them has become an essential aspect of a modern training system.

Education and training need not come exclusively from the public system. A very large amount of training today is done by employers either directly through internal programs or indirectly through purchases from providers. Unfortunately, there is only a limited amount of data on the relative importance of employer financed and provided training relative to that which comes from the public sector.

However, we do know that in this province that amount of industry purchased training has increased dramatically over the past decade. It is also clear many employers are now re-engineering their employment systems to make required career plans, required competencies, and training requirements an integral part of the employer-employee relationship. A large amount of the training being identified as essential is in the form of relatively short programs provided at work or in the community by the employer. The importance of employer supported training is indicated from the data from a recent Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on literacy which found that while only about 8% of Canadian adults taking some form of training in 2003 received public support, over 45% received employer support.

A recent survey, of small and medium sized enterprises by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in Saskatchewan, found that in 2002 each business on average devoted 130 hours per year on training of a new employee. These numbers do not distinguish between type and duration of training but nevertheless, illustrate how important employer-supported training has become. The learning pathways today go well beyond the formal, pre-employment training so commonly seen a few years ago as the sole basis of a training system.

A few years back, there were heated debates about whether training should be financed by the public sector or by the private sector. A common assumption in these debates was that the benefits of training, unlike broader education, accrue mainly to the employer. This ostensibly supported the view that the largest part of public moneys should go to broader, more general education, which at the post-secondary level was seen as being largely provided by the universities where the education was less employer or industry specific and, thus, a benefit to society as a whole. In part because of this view, the largest part of public investment was made in the university system, with the training system treated as a poor cousin not worthy of the same kind of respect.

Looking back, these arguments seem biased and poorly informed. But they have left a legacy of popular thinking that sees training as less worthy than university education, generating a private benefit that largely accrues to employers.

The view that training is less worthy than university education has short changed a large number of people who have pursued general university education, only to find that expected job opportunities are not available in the province. There are a number of problems with the view that training should be, to a considerable extent, the responsibility of the private sector. First, we know that sustaining a high standard of living for all requires a world class training system, and that this in turn requires a considerable investment by taxpayers in supporting such a system. Economic success will be dependent on training and economic success is a public benefit as much as a private one. Second, academic education, while important to society, does not perform well in serving the whole of the population. Education provided by universities disproportionately serves young people from professional and higher income families. A recent survey shows that in Canada, in 1999, over three times as many offspring of professional and managerial fathers attended university as did offspring of working class fathers. In the 35-44 year age group, 42.9% of offspring of the former had university completion, compared to 11.6 % of the latter. In equity terms, university education is serving the better off to a disproportionate degree.

Skills are mobile, meaning that trained people can leave after receiving the benefit of employer-supported training. Thus, there is an inherent disincentive involved in employer-financed training, since the employer's investment can readily be lost by an employee leaving. In practical terms this makes it more likely that an effective training system will involve a partnership between employers, learners, and government, with employers playing a large role in developing very specific skills geared to their particular needs and government providing more transferable skills and competencies. Of course the line separating the two is never going to be exact but the emphasis in distributing responsibility is clear.

For a wide variety of reasons the typical learner engaged with the training system has changed a great deal over the past few years. As has been noted, the training system originally largely served young, highly mobile males seeking training in preparation for a first job. These learners usually did not have any family responsibilities, could live on very limited means during the training period and were willing and perhaps even anxious to go to school in another location. This has changed over a generation or more and has forced quite a different business model on the training system. The typical learner today in the technical occupations is as likely to be female as male, to have been out of school for a period of time, to have been an early school leaver, to have family responsibilities with commitments to a home community, and to have developed skills beyond those typically acquired in school. The challenges involved in attending long courses at a location away from home are considerable. It is no surprise there are pressures for training closer to home and work, shorter programs linked together to form a larger whole, support for child care and transportation, and a greater accommodation of family responsibilities.

One result is that there is an ever increasing demand for and importance attached to the recognition of competencies and knowledge already acquired prior to taking part in training. The idea that learning already acquired, regardless of how acquired, should be recognized and accounted for is a concern to individual learners for obvious reasons. Participation in learning activities can often be disruptive, time consuming, and costly in a myriad of ways but it is not only the individual learners whose interests are served by a recognition and accounting for learning already acquired. Costs and demands on the training system are reduced. As well employers, who in many instances must release learners from work and who often bear considerable costs, have an interest in ensuring that as little time and expense as is necessary is devoted to the learning effort. The modern training system recognizes the learning that has already occurred when committing a learner to a program of study, however short or long. Both learners and employers are also showing a strong preference for a combination for formal instruction and work experience. This model has of course long been a feature of the apprenticeship system with its historical antecedents in indentured craft work. Today apprenticeships integrate classroom training and on-the-job training and work experience under the direction of a certified tradesperson in a large number of skilled trades. The concept that training and education should have a work experience component has been around for a long while in co-operative education (co-op), internship, and clinical experience under preceptors. The form and character of the work experience as part of training varies a great deal, and the offerings are still not the norm in the training system. The appeal of such approaches is that the workplace, under the right conditions, can provide very effective skills and knowledge transfer and for some types of training, a more efficient delivery mechanism; and, the learner gains a familiarity of and appreciation for many of the intangibles that are needed to successfully function in a work environment. Employers are also developing a growing appreciation of the benefits of such work experience programs as a recruiting aid.

The Panel heard concerns expressed that some of the recent trends and developments in approaches to training are sacrificing generic knowledge and skills, including analytical ability, social and intellectual knowledge, and problem solving ability, in an attempt to achieve employment readiness quickly and at as little cost as possible. We were told that this is even a concern at the high school and even primary school levels where work experience programs are beginning to be introduced. One concern is that students are being implicitly encouraged to favour particular sets of career choices before they have had a chance to mature and experience a more broadly based education. Another concern is that an early focus on employment shifts the priority from developing an educated individual to one who is just a cog in a more efficient production system.

4.3 Shaping a Vision

It is claimed that a choice is involved in formulating an appropriate vision. If lifelong learning is a kind of pathway, the choice is between a vision that sees ones' learning pathway as either pre-Kindergarten to Education (preK-E) or pre-Kindergarten to Jobs (preK-Job).

The Panel considers this claim to be based on a false dichotomy. It is quite clear that virtually all learning pathways for all individuals are, in an important sense, part of the preparation for a productive role in society. A fundamental value within our society is that every person should have the opportunity to become as autonomous and self-sufficient as possible. Further, every person is expected to try as much as possible to contribute to their own self-sufficiency through productive work. In simple terms, the best social policy is a good job. Preparing people for a good job is both a virtue and an obligation of the training system. Of course, all people are different and come from different circumstances, so it is not possible that everyone be equally prepared for the same jobs. But the effort should and must be made so people have the best job for their abilities and interests.

The idea that the training system should somehow be structured to reduce possible choices so that learners will not make choices that do not sufficiently advance general knowledge is very much part of the traditional view of an educational system operating on the industrial model of mass and standardized production. The new model is based on choice and flexibility. It is clear that not only do people want such choice and flexibility, but that it is essential if our education and training needs are to be met. Our education and training needs are in part economic, as they should be, given the importance of the economy to everyone's well-being. They are also more broadly intellectual and social, and the system must offer people choices that will serve both their economic and broader intellectual and social needs. This is not an either/or choice for people. Rather, they must have the opportunity to meet all needs, at times and under circumstances, that suit them. The more choices and opportunities the better at all parts of the learning pathway.

The Panel believes that a vision is needed for the training system and for the unique Saskatchewan training model. Notwithstanding its continuous evolution and adaptation, the model continues to be unique and distinct in many important ways. A vision is important to understanding and preserving that uniqueness and in unifying and concentrating effort on common goals. It is also a vehicle to help to ensure that all who are part of the system meet the challenge that lies ahead in ways that serve the province well.

The vision for the training system that the Panel proposes is as follows:

> Through training linked to personal development and employment, Saskatchewan people from all regions and communities will, to the greatest degree that they are able and willing, participate in the dynamic, high skilled, knowledge economy of the future, serving local, regional and international markets.

4.4 The New Training Model

The review of the training system as outlined to this point, the system-wide vision articulated in the previous section, and the consultations the Panel has undertaken has assisted us in setting out a model for the training system. We see this as a requirement for a coherent, responsive, and effective system which will meet both the needs of learners and the labour market over the coming years.

The training system is complex. It must serve a wide variety of needs and interests. Meeting these needs and serving these interests is neither simple nor easy. Some of these needs and interests work against one another, giving rise to a need for trade-offs.

The Panel is proposing what it calls the New Training Model (NTM). The New Training Model is not by any means entirely new. It has been evolving and developing over the years amongst the professionals who think and plan for the future and among the partners in the system. Many of its important elements were anticipated in the Faris Report and in the organization of the community colleges in the 1970s. The Panel has also found that many organizations representing employers and employees have been thinking in terms of the concepts underlying the model and forming ideas on how to proceed based on this thinking.

Taken as an integrated whole the NTM involves a radical transformation of training compared to what it traditionally was assumed to be. Many of the conventional beliefs about what constitutes good training no longer hold. The vision of training as beginning and ending at discrete points in a person's life is now an anachronism. Training is part of lifelong learning and one part of the larger human endeavour to understand and know. The pieces in that larger endeavour will depend upon the learner's choices in the face of opportunities provided.

The New Training Model is:

Learner-centered:

- The needs of learners are the first priority;
- Programs and services adapt to the needs of learners and employers;
- Work experience is valued and recognized; and,
- It is a comprehensive, integrated array of programs and services.

Seamless and lifelong learning:

- Institutions and programs are operated and managed to ensure a smooth continuum for learners; and,
- It recognizes prior learning as part of continuous, progressive learning and improvement of skills.

Flexible:

- It ensures a variety of pathways to learning, with a broad mix of opportunities adaptable to individual needs and circumstances on a continuous learning basis;
- It links training with career services;
- It has the capacity to meet the needs of learners and employers; and,
- It is decentralized.

Responsive:

- It integrates economic opportunities and economic development;
- It provides a comprehensive, integrated array of programs and services that meet the needs of learners, industry, and the province;
- It responds to labour market needs, including industry and employers generally, to students, and to communities; and,
- It integrates work experience and formal training.

Accessible and Inclusive:

- Barriers and limits due to social, economic or geographic factors are minimized or eliminated;
- It provides open and equal access to all people committed to training to advance their personal goals;
- Participation is maximized;
- It ensures inclusiveness based on fairness and equity by supporting the development of a representative workforce; and,
- It provides increased participation, and reductions in barriers to participation, with a particular emphasis on First Nations and Métis people.

Innovative:

- It encourages and supports the development and implementation of new ideas and strategies.

Supported by Technology:

- Technology is regularly used to provide access, support, and enhanced programming which meet the needs of students, employers, and businesses.

A Partnership (between and among the training system, and partners and stakeholders including students, employers/industry and communities):

- Other training system institutions, stakeholders, and partners are respected and communication is open;
- Collaboration is an ongoing practice;
- Stakeholders and partners are involved in planning, assessing and delivering programs and services; and,
- Learner success in post-secondary education programs and employment is a shared responsibility between learners and training system partners and stakeholders.

Adequate Capacity:

- It has capacity to meet needs of both learners and the labour force.

Highly developed workplaces:

- It encourages workplaces to reward training and work preparation and to embrace diverse employees from a variety of social and economic backgrounds; and,
- It provides meaningful incentives to participate in learning and training, including maximum integration of training and employment opportunities.

Accountable:

- Planning, policy development and program implementation are learner-focused and evidence-based;
- It is committed to providing programs and services that meet or exceed industry and/or publicly recognized standards;
- It employs a transparent decision-making model and is continuously improving according to outcomes and impacts and by promising practices;
- It is accountable for the effective and efficient use of resources in preparing learners for jobs; and,
- It is sustainable over the long-term.

The vision of a training system as highly centralized and regulated is no longer appropriate. In the NTM quality no longer is dependent upon standardized, centralized delivery. The system must, can, and has developed new ways for quality assurance. The real question is one of how well the more traditional parts of the system can adapt to the new reality. Those that do not adapt will be displaced by new innovative providers, which may be located in other parts of the public system, in industry, or in the private training system (private vocational schools, private trainers and community-based organizations). Innovation is driving the system and all parts of the system must either innovate or languish.

Fixed term pre-employment programs are no longer the standard against which all training is to be measured. Young, mobile high school leavers no longer represent the core of the learners. There are no longer standard entrants: students of all ages, all backgrounds, and with varied circumstances want in and must be brought in if the economic and social needs of the coming decades are to be met.

The boundaries between the start of training and the end of training have broken down and can no longer be depended upon to design programs. The boundaries of training reach back to the schools and reach forward to employment. The linkages between training and successful employment must be addressed to ensure there are sufficient incentives to participate.

Employers and learners demand flexibility in the timing, term, and location of training. Technology is at the core of instruction, and flexibility and learner centeredness at the core of delivery. Knowledge has become exceedingly complex and is often beyond the capacity of an individual instructor to fully possess. Instructors facilitate access to knowledge as often as they transmit it directly. Workplace learning often has to be relied upon for a learner to become fully competent.

The training system is an essential element in the success of the individual. Part of its role is to support career planning and the realization of training in support of such planning.

The training system cannot act alone in realizing all of the goals of individuals and society. It can, however, work to be fully integrated into those aspects of individual and community life that depend upon learning and training. The public training system cannot provide nearly all of what is needed. But it can be a catalyst and a source of inspiration, leadership, and direction. In order to do that, it must be coherent and engaged, and its leadership must project a vision and direction.

The New Training Model provides that vision and direction. It reaches into the home, the workplace, and the community. It embraces continuous learning, recognition of prior learning, integration of learning activities, the division of traditional learning into components and parts, decentralization, linkages to employment and work, active mobilization of all parts of the population, and recognition of labour market needs. The question, "training for what?", suggesting a choice between training for work and training for some larger human purpose, represents a view of the system that is oddly dated. Training is for the learner, and the learner will decide. Work and preparation for work is highly valued both by individuals and society. The best social policy is a job and support for people to become more productive and to enhance their productivity and earning capacity throughout their lives. The Saskatchewan economy has reached the point where it can deliver on the promise with the right investment, education and training, and employment policies. The task of the system is to respond. The New Training Model provides the pathway forward.

The system is a partnership. It is the responsibility of the partners to be the keepers of the system and the vision. The government must lead. But it cannot and should not do this on its own. The New Training Model can only achieve its full potential if all of the parties and partners share in the commitment and responsibility. Not to share in the vision will doom the training system to growing irrelevance and obsolescence. The costs to the province as a whole and to its individual citizens would be immense. The result would be a low skill, low productivity, low wage economy languishing in a backwater of economic and social deprivation. Fortunately that is not the choice that the government has made. Nor is it the choice industry, labour, or the citizens of the province generally want to make.

4.5 Summary

Generally, we found the partners in the training system committed to the concepts inherent in the NTM. Many have been responsible for developing it and supporting its evolution over time. Saskatchewan Learning deserves special mention in this regard. It has shown a commendable commitment to leadership and innovation over the past decade. With the support of many professionals and institutions in the system, great strides have been made in implementing the principles of the NTM.

But more needs to be done. The situation facing the training system over the next decade is unprecedented. It must meet the challenge. Each and every part of the system must achieve levels of effectiveness never before demanded. All parts of the system must be measured and judged against the requirements of the NTM. This is the standard that the Panel has used in its assessments and in formulating its recommendations.

The previous five-year reviews of the Regional Colleges and SIAST and the Saskatchewan Training Strategy published in October 2000, were used as benchmarks to assess the training system.

The vision as stated in this chapter has guided the Panel's thinking about the future architecture, roles, and mandate of the training system.

The Review's questions and criteria have drawn on the submissions and consultations that the Panel engaged in prior to preparing its report. These are used throughout the report to assist in evaluating the system.

The Panel recommends:

6. **The New Training Model provides the fundamental framework for the next five years of development within the training system.**

5

Structure of the Saskatchewan Training System

Chapter 5: Structure of the Saskatchewan Training System

5.1 Introduction

Strong public training institutions have a critical role providing access for learners to attain and maintain knowledge, skills, and abilities, and ensuring a provincial capacity to meet labour demands. The Saskatchewan public training system is an interdependent partnership involving Saskatchewan Learning, the three public institutions, SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and the SATCC, plus a number of other agencies, institutions and programs. The public training system encompasses partners and stakeholders within the Learning and Employment Sectors, including, aboriginal institutions and organizations, the universities, the K-12 system, employers and employers' organizations, and numerous other labour and sectoral bodies. Also, there are relationships with the private vocational schools.

In many respects, when people think of the training system, they think of the actors within it. As a result, the institutions attract the greatest amount of attention. The institutions are important, and a careful look at the system requires that each of the institutions be understood and scrutinized. This chapter provides a general overview of the system and the major programs within it.

Saskatchewan's training system provides an array of programs and services that provide for lifelong learning by supporting individuals to develop general and job specific skills, make the transition into employment, and maintain and change employment. Programs include: skills training (institutional, work-based, and industry), income support, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and university programs. Other services include: career services, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and labour market information and planning.

Skills Training is a process where individuals acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform a set of activities associated with employment. This process can occur in a variety of ways, including classroom instruction, on the job learning, or self-directed study and practice.

Work-based training refers to programs where the majority of instruction takes place on the job. Industry and educational institutions work together in various ways to design, deliver, and certify this kind of training.

Industry training refers to the activities that employers, unions, and professional associations undertake on their own to provide training. This encompasses many types of training, ranging from informal on–the-job orientation, to structured courses and programs, and to professional development seminars. SIAST, aboriginal controlled institutions and Regional Colleges provide training for individual industries/employers on a fee-for-service basis.

5.2 Institutions

- ***Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology***

SIAST, established by provincial legislation in 1987, was the amalgamation of four technical institutes, an advanced technology center, and four urban community colleges. In addition to a central office, four campuses (Wascana Campus, Regina; Kelsey Campus, Saskatoon; Palliser Campus, Moose Jaw; and Woodland Campus, Prince Albert) were created.

SIAST:

- develops and delivers technical education and training;
- provides curriculum development;
- certifies training through the provision of certificates and diplomas; and,
- brokers programs with and for other technical/education institutions, colleges, industry, and professional bodies.

Institutional training includes programs where the majority of the training occurs through classroom and practical instruction. Programs are available through both full- and part-time study and may be done in whole or in part through technology enhanced learning. Institutional training is delivered by SIAST (the largest provincial provider of this form of skills training), Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT), Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), and the Regional Colleges. Regional Colleges deliver skills training programs by brokering programs from SIAST or other credit granting institutions.

SIAST offers, through its four campuses and a Virtual Campus, a broad range of career-oriented, certificate and diploma programs in, Business and Agriculture, Community/Human Services, Industrial/Trades, ABE, Science and Health Services, Nursing, and Technology. In addition, SIAST offers vocational training and customized training for industry. In collaboration with the SATCC, SIAST provides technical training in 24 trades to support apprenticeship programs. Programs are offered using traditional, distance, and technology enhanced learning methodologies on-campus, through extension, and through the Virtual Campus. In addition, SIAST maintains a partnership with the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) through a federation agreement by which DTI is able to broker provincial and nationally accredited programs.

SIAST receives an annual grant of approximately $105 million from Saskatchewan Learning and generates approximately 35% of its revenue from tuitions and training service contracts.

SIAST is not a degree granting educational institution and may only offer a degree program in collaboration with a recognized university. Graduates receive their degrees from the partner university. An example of a program like this is the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) offered in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan and the First Nations University of Canada.

A certificate is a credential SIAST issues for the successful completion of programs that provide skills training and education that lead to entry level employment in a particular occupation. The programs have specific admission requirements and are generally 30 weeks long (corresponding to one year of study).

An advanced certificate is a credential SIAST issues for the successful completion of credit programs that build on post-secondary level education and lead to a higher degree of specialization in the same or related field. The programs require a certificate, diploma or degree (in the same or a related field) as admission requirements and are between six and 20 weeks long.

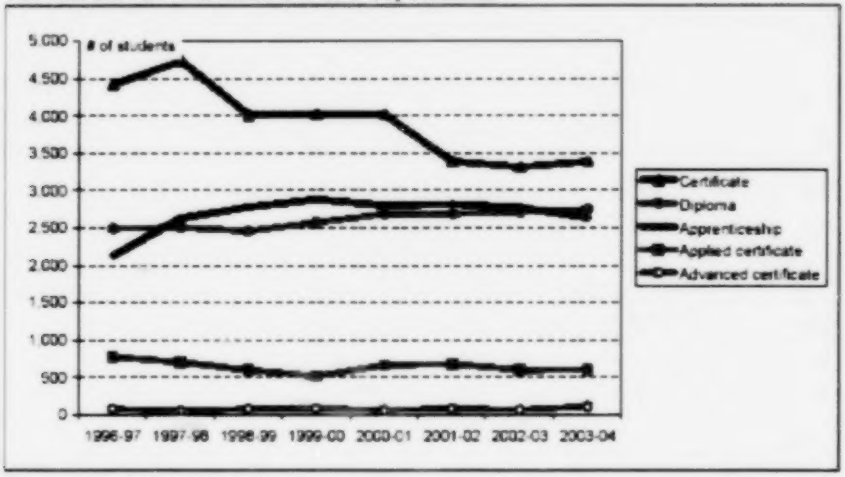
An applied certificate is a credential SIAST issues for the successful completion of credit programs that provide introductory level skills training in a specific application of an occupation. The programs have specific admission requirements and are between six and 20 weeks long.

A diploma is a credential SIAST issues for the successful completion of credit programs that provide comprehensive and advanced skills training and education that leads to entry level employment in a particular occupation. The programs have specific admission requirements and are generally 60 weeks long (corresponding to two years of study).

Each of these is referred to as certified public training in Saskatchewan. A factor unique to the Saskatchewan colleges system is that certificates and diplomas must be earned from SIAST regardless of whether they are delivered by the Regional Colleges. The only exceptions are those granted by the universities and by SIIT. The Regional Colleges and DTI may be brokers for the delivery of such courses in the north and in rural Saskatchewan.

The following Figure 5.1 shows the numbers of students at SIAST since 1996. As can be seen, the number of students has decreased over the period, largely as a result of a reduction of certificate students. The numbers have stabilized since 2001-02.

Figure 5.1

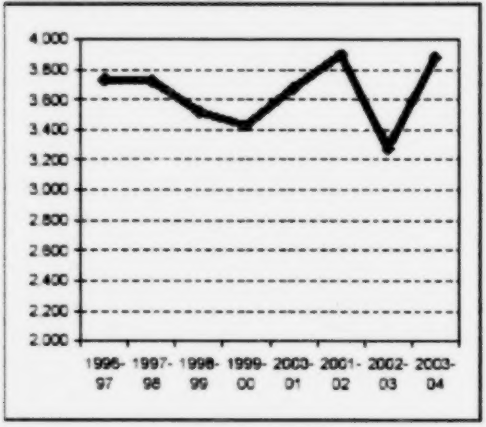


Full Time and Part Time Students at SIAST, by Credential

Source: Sask Trends Monitor

The number of graduates has not declined to the same degree. The following Figure 5.2 shows graduates for all programs over the same period. The number of graduates has varied somewhat over the period but is relatively stable at about 3,800 per year.

Figure 5.2

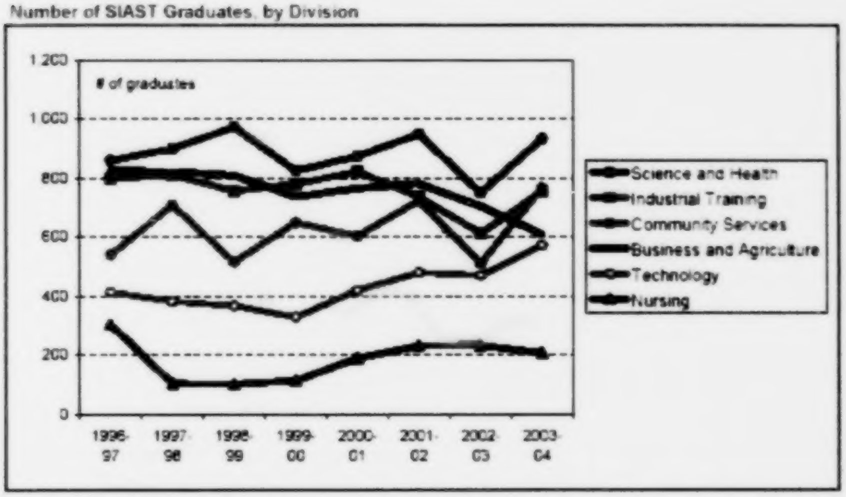


Number of Graduates, SIAST

Source: Sask Trends Monitor

Figure 5.3

Number of SIAST Graduates, by Division



Source: Sask Trends Monitor

The number of graduates by general areas of study is shown in Figure 5.3. Nursing has been increasing over the past five years after declining in 1997 (when the last Diploma nurses graduated and were replaced by graduates with a degree from the University of Saskatchewan). Business and agriculture is trending downward, while technologies are increasing. Industrial pre-employment training has also declined somewhat.

A detailed breakdown of areas of study shows that SIAST has been quite adaptable in accommodating differing numbers of students. The data in the following Figure 5.4 suggest that SIAST has maintained a considerable amount of flexibility in its programming.

Figure 5.4

SIAST Graduates by Field of Study (CIP)

CIP	Description	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
1	Agriculture, Agricultural Operations and Related Sciences	37	38	27	38	31	16	12	19
3	Natural Resources and Conservation	41	26	7	23	20	13	17	53
10	Communications Technologies and Support Services	9	7	10	5	11	10	10	5
11	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	70	87	122	130	184	181	173	164
12	Personal and Culinary Services	173	175	119	162	141	194	135	157
13	Education	108	146	125	208	191	256	174	278
15	Engineering Technology	293	257	219	224	279	297	314	320
19	Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences	8	51	13	11	8	13	9	10
22	Law, Legal Services, and Legal Studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
25	Library Science	0	26	2		1	20	1	16
31	Parks, Recreation, Leisure and Fitness Studies	23	13	21	25	12	16	2	21
32	Basic Skills	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	16
34	Health Related Knowledge and Skills	11	62	32	31	26	14	18	32
35	Interpersonal and Social Skills	0	45	0	4	7	2	10	5
41	Science Technologies/Technicians	49	29	25	22	26	23	29	27
43	Protective Services	45	43	28	23	21	47	47	75
44	Public Administration and Services	142	129	121	108	88	76	56	109
46	Construction Trades	86	68	104	82	115	107	135	207
47	Mechanic and Repair Technology	355	352	302	302	272	331	267	280
48	Precision Production Trades	239	262	245	167	176	207	162	209
49	Transportation and Materials Moving Services	181	171	209	298	366	222	182	194
50	Visual and Performing Arts	19	9	26	16	30	29	14	32
51	Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences	1,123	966	1,031	907	1,048	1,153	964	1,122
52	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	722	766	721	648	623	671	549	526
Grand Total		3,734	3,726	3,521	3,430	3,680	3,898	3,280	3,881

Source: Sask Trends Monitor

Programs can vary considerably in the number of graduates year over year; however, SIAST has remained at a relatively stable level in terms of graduate numbers.

- ***Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission (SATCC)***

The SATCC is an industry-led agency with a legislated mandate to govern and manage the apprenticeship system in Saskatchewan. The Commission is overseen by a Board of twenty members appointed by the provincial government and it reports to the Minister of Learning. The majority of the members of the Board are selected by industry, equally representing employers and employees. The Commission Board also has representation from SIAST, the provincial government, and equity groups. The ATTC develops industry occupational standards in apprenticeable trades and provides services to employers and tradespersons. The Minister is responsible for the administration of the *Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Act, (1999)*. The Act sets out the rules and regulations that govern the apprenticeship program. The Commission is accountable to the Government of Saskatchewan through the Minister.

Forty-four Trade Boards (233 members) have been appointed to assist the Commission in administering the apprenticeship and trade certification program in Saskatchewan. Current boards include Trade Boards, Curriculum and Examination Development Boards and Trade Examining Boards.

Apprenticeship is a system of training and certification that involves a formal agreement between an employee (who wants to learn a skill) and an employer (who needs a skilled worker). The formal agreement, registered with the Commission, sets out the period of training (ranging from 2 to 5 years) and the responsibilities and obligations of the both employer and apprentice. Apprenticeship training consists of both a practical component and a theoretical component. Practical training, provided on-the-job, is reinforced with periods of technical training usually in periods of 6 to 10 weeks per year.

Apprenticeship training is an "earning while learning" arrangement for a required term. Under the supervision of a certified journeyperson, an apprentice receives knowledge and develops skills associated with a designated trade through on-the-job training. The skills learned on-the-job are supplemented with a required number of weeks each year of technical training.

After completing their training, apprentices write the journeyperson trade examination to become certified in a designated trade. Most trades are designated as inter-provincial Red Seal trades which recognize the certification as meeting a national standard. Persons working in a trade for a minimum prescribed number of hours may also challenge the journeyperson examination without necessarily taking formal training.

As apprentices become eligible, they are scheduled by SATCC into technical training sessions provided by SIAST and other trainers, including: Western Trade Training Institute, SaskPower, Operating Engineers Training Institute of Saskatchewan, SIIT, SED Systems, Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers Joint Training Committee, and Regional Colleges.

SATCC consultants visit approximately 2,800 businesses annually in order to counsel apprentices and employers and to ensure compliance to apprenticeship regulations.

The Commission and SIAST have developed a Training Protocol setting out the roles and responsibilities of the Commission and SIAST with respect to the training to be delivered by SIAST. The Commission reimburses SIAST for training based on the actual cost of training as per the training purchase agreement that is negotiated annually.

The following Figure 5.5 outlines the number of apprentices registered in Saskatchewan in the past three years, as well as the numbers who were Aboriginal and the numbers who were female. Although the number of Aboriginal apprentices has increased, the number of Aboriginal journeypersons is still well below the proportion of Aboriginal people of working age. The number of new journeyperson certificates issued has increased slightly over the past three years from 1,043 in 2003 to 1,096 in 2005.

Figure 5.5

Active Apprentices

	June 30, 2003	June 30, 2004	June 30, 2005
Total at Year-end	5,108	5,258	5,436
Active During the Year	6,552	6,380	6,817
New Journeypersons During the Year	1,043	1,015	1,096
# of Aboriginal Apprentices Active During the Year	567	817	989
New Aboriginal Journeyperson Certificates During the Year	34	37	59
# of Female Apprentices Active During the Year	1119	913	964
New Female Journeyperson Certificates During Year	184	172	205

Source: Department of Learning Data

The following Figures 5.6 and 5.7 contain the SIAST training programs offered as part of the program that apprentices are required to complete and the numbers of apprentices taking these training courses.

Figure 5.6

SIAST Technical Training Programs for Apprentices

Program Name	Campus	Term of Apprenticeship	Length of Training at SIAST per Year/Level
Agricultural Machinery Technician	Kelsey	4 years	8 weeks per year
John Deere Agricultural Technician	Kelsey	4 years	Level 1 – 12 weeks Level 2 – 8 weeks Level 3 – 12 weeks Level 4 – 8 weeks
Automotive Service Technician	Kelsey and Palliser	4 years	8 weeks per year
Automotive Service Educational Program (ASEP)	Kelsey and Wascana	4 years	8 weeks per year
Bricklayer	Palliser	4 years	Level 1 – 8 weeks Level 2 – 8 weeks Level 3 – 8 weeks
Carpenter	Palliser and Woodland	4 years	7 weeks per year

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Bricklayer	Palliser	4 years	Level 1 - 8 weeks Level 2 - 8 weeks Level 3 - 8 weeks
Carpenter	Palliser and Woodland	4 years	7 weeks per year

Cook	Kelsey and Palliser	3 years	40 days per year
Custom Harvester	Wascana	4 years	20 days per year
Electrician	Palliser and Woodland	4 years	8 weeks per year
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic	Kelsey	4 years	8 weeks per year
Industrial Instrument Mechanic	Palliser	4 years	10 weeks per year
Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	Kelsey	4 years	8 weeks per year
Ironworker (Structural)	Palliser	3 years	Level 1 - 7 weeks Level 2 - 8 weeks Level 3 - 7 weeks
Machinist	Kelsey	4 years	Level 1 - 8 weeks Level 2 - 8 weeks Level 3 - 8 weeks Level 4 - 6 weeks
Motor Vehicle Body Repairer	Kelsey and Wascana	4 years	Level 1 - 6 weeks Level 2 - 6 weeks Level 3 - 7 weeks Level 4 - 7 weeks
Partsperson	Kelsey	3 years	Level 1 - 8 weeks Level 2 - 8 weeks Level 3 - 6 weeks
Plumber	Kelsey	5 years	Level 1 - 8 weeks Level 2 - 8 weeks Level 3 - 7 weeks Level 4 - 7 weeks
Pork Production Technician	Wascana	2 years	15 days per year
Refrigeration Mechanic	Kelsey	4 years	Level 1 - 8 weeks Level 2 - 8 weeks Level 3 - 8 weeks Level 4 - 8 weeks
Roofer	Woodland	3 years	6 weeks per year
Sheet Metal Worker	Kelsey	4 years	8 weeks per year
Steamfitter-Pipefitter	Kelsey	4 years	Level 1 - 8 weeks Level 2 - 8 weeks Level 3 - 7 weeks Level 4 - 7 weeks
Steel Fabricator	Kelsey	3 years	8 weeks per year
Truck and Transport Mechanic	Kelsey	4 years	8 weeks per year
Welder	Kelsey and Palliser	3 years	Level 1 - 7 weeks Level 2 - 7 weeks Level 3 - 8 weeks

Source: SIAST

Figure 5.7

ATTENDANCE IN APPRENTICESHIP TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSES BY TRADE AND STAGE OF TRAINING 2003-2004

Attendance in Apprenticeship Technical Training Courses by Trade and Stage of Training 2003-04

Trade	Enrolment Levels				
	All Levels	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Agricultural Machinery Technician	100	22	20	37	21
Aircraft Maintenance Engineer	6	6	0	0	0
Automotive Service Technician	246	53	51	66	76
Barber Stylist *	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Boilermaker	30	6	8	7	9
Bricklayer	34	13	15	6	N/A
Cabinetmaker	1	1	0	0	0
Carpenter	307	128	62	62	55
Cement Finisher	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Cook	85	27	31	27	N/A
Cosmetologist *	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Crane and Hoist Operator	32	22	10	0	N/A
Custom Harvester	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Drywall and Acoustical Mechanic	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Electrician	551	151	174	107	119
Electronics Assembler	15	7	8	N/A	N/A
Electronics Technician (C.P.)	0	0	0	0	0
Floorcovering Installer	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Food and Beverage **	30	30	N/A	N/A	N/A
Glassworker	2	0	2	0	0
Guest Services Representative **	30	30	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heavy-Duty Equipment Mechanic	78	10	22	23	23
Horticulture Technician	2	1	0	1	N/A
Industrial Instrument Mechanic	39	11	9	9	10
Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	187	33	48	48	58
Insulator	12	12	0	0	N/A
Ironworker Reinforcing Rebar	0	0	0	0	N/A
Ironworker Structural	18	0	8	10	N/A
Locksmith	1	1	0	0	N/A
Machinist	87	10	11	23	43
Motor Vehicle Body Repairer	63	11	7	29	16
MVB Refinisher	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Painter and Decorator	6	2	1	3	N/A
Partsperson	31	5	11	15	N/A
Pipeline Equipment Operator	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Plasterer	0	0	0	0	N/A
Plumber	296	99	67	48	82
Pork Production Technician	38	0	38	N/A	N/A
Power Lineperson	104	27	31	20	26
Refrigeration Mechanic	69	12	23	11	23
Roofer	6	2	4	0	N/A
Sheet Metal Worker	92	33	23	12	24
Sprinkler Systems Installer	12	4	1	7	N/A
Steamfitter-Pipefitter	48	12	23	13	0
Steel Fabricator	21	0	11	10	N/A
Tilesetter	1	0	1	0	0
Truck and Transport Mechanic	69	10	24	24	11
Water Well Driller	1	0	1	N/A	N/A
Welder	135	35	42	58	N/A
- Production Line Welder *	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	2885	826	787	676	596

* Technical training is completed prior to registration.
** Technical training is in partnership with Saskatchewan Tourism.
N/A - No applicable training for this Trade/Level
Note: Data is based on activity July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004

Source: SATCC

The Commission receives annual operating and training funding of approximately $12M. The Commission generates approximately 11-12% of its revenue from tuitions and fees.

Additional information and discussion about the apprenticeship system is found in the Chapter 8, Work Experience, Co-operative Learning, Apprentices, and On-the-Job Training.

- ***Regional Colleges***

The Regional Colleges were initially established in 1973 under the *Community Colleges Act* as a means of providing continuous learning opportunities for Saskatchewan people in their home communities. The expectation was that they would offer credit programs brokered from other post-secondary institutions.

In 1987, under *The Regional Colleges Act,* the name was changed from "community" to "regional" colleges and the system restructured so that there was no college in the four urban centers with SIAST campuses. The mandate describes Regional Colleges as providing residents of rural and northern Saskatchewan with access to technical and university programs, cost-recovery training, career services, ABE, and noncredit programs, including business, industry, and community education programs. The provision of technical and university programming is delivered through brokerage arrangements with credit granting institutions.

The regional college system receives approximately $33 million annually from Saskatchewan Learning for operations, including delivery of ABE, technical/ vocational programs, university programs, and career services. Regional Colleges generate approximately 30% of their revenues from tuitions and training service contracts.

Enrolments (2003-04) for the Regional Colleges (expressed in the form of participant hours and full-load equivalents (FLEs)), are as follows:

Figure 5.8

Program Type	Participant Hours		FLEs
ABE - Credit	882,094	33.9%	980.1
ABE - Noncredit	244,205	9.38%	581.4
Skills Inst. Credit	222,746	8.56%	928.1
Skills Inst. Credit - SIAST	934,685	35.92%	1,187.1
Skills Inst. Credit - Other	106,434	4.09%	118.3
Skills Non Credit	99,780	3.84%	415.7
University	111,776	4.31%	286.6
Total	2,601,720	100%	4,497.3

Source: Department of Learning

It is worth noting from that 10.22% of the institute skills credits were provided by credit granting institutions other than SIAST.

Additional information and discussion about issues related to delivery of training programs in rural and northern Saskatchewan is found in Chapter 7, Recognition of Rural and Northern Saskatchewan.

5.3 Saskatchewan Learning

The department provides leadership and direction to the learning sector. It is responsible to the Minister for the implementation of legislation relevant to the sector, and is responsible for assuring the integrity, coherence, and functionality of the sector. The department's scope of responsibilities is broad, extending across all education and training from pre-kindergarten to employment. This scope is deliberate in an effort to realize integration and seamlessness throughout the sector. It provides a significant proportion of the funds and support to the public institutions. It develops and delivers numerous programs, many delivered through the institutions, including basic education and various forms of skills training. It provides financial support to students in post-secondary education, including income support. It works mostly through partnerships and arrangements with institutions, organizations, and industry. With the exception of the income support programs, it delivers very few programs directly.

The following Figure 5.9 contains the overall outputs, by category, of the post-secondary system for which the department is responsible:

Figure 5.9

Outputs by Category

Credential	**2000/2001** (Baseline)	**2001/2002**	**2002/2003**	**2003/04**
Degree[7]	29,940	30,813	31,203	31,687
Certificate/Diploma[8]	6,523[9]	5,649[10]	5,434[11]	5,512[12]
Apprentices served	6,615	6,244	6.552	6.380
Basic Education[13]	5,077	4.987	5.033	4.982
Type of Delivery	**2000/2001** (Baseline)	**2001/2002**	**2002/2003**	**2003/04**
Work-based Training (JobStart/Future Skills)	3,353	3.062	3.293	4,078
Regional Colleges (full-time and part-time)	33,668[14]	30,126	25.720[15]	20.828[16]

Source: 2004-5 Saskatchewan Learning Annual Report

Since 2000, university completions have increased and technical certificates and diploma completions have declined. There has also been a decline in basic education, apprentices served, work-based training, and regional college attendance. These declines are of concern given the labour market needs and conditions that have been observed in this report.

The primary objectives of Saskatchewan Learning and the learning sector include learner success, a seamless continuum of learning, inclusiveness, and support for economic and social development. The department provides funding and program support strategies to achieve these objectives. Partnerships are emphasized by the department.

The following are the most important programs and services that the department provides.

- ***Income Support:*** Income support is essential to ensure people are not excluded from training because they cannot afford to attend. Income support programs are available to all eligible Saskatchewan learners by application to the specific program. Programs include:

    - Canada/Saskatchewan Student Loan program (diploma and certificate programs);
    - Provincial Training Allowance (PTA) (ABE and short skills courses - less than 12 weeks);
    - Skills Training Benefit (training programs); and,
    - Apprenticeship Training Allowance (apprentices and tradespersons).

    A review of financial assistance for students was not included in the Panel's mandate. However, there is an issue that the Panel feels compelled to comment upon.

    Some students need assistance with particular obstacles and barriers they face as they participate in training programs. In northern Saskatchewan, and to some extend in rural Saskatchewan, some students travel regularly over considerable distance to take training, many without access to public transportation. The extra transportation costs for these students is not adequately met by existing programs. The Panel is of the view that this problem merits special attention.

- ***Adult Basic Education:*** The ABE program helps people develop the literacy, academic, and job readiness skills required to participate in the labour market or to enter post-secondary education and training. The program includes literacy and life skills preparation, academic upgrading for credit at the 10 or 12 levels, high school completion, General Equivalency Development (GED) testing and preparation, English as a Second Language, transitions to work, counselling and assessment services. It consists of fundamental knowledge, skills and abilities, including communications, numeracy, critical thinking and problem-solving, team work, responsibility and initiative, and independent learning.

SIAST, DTI, SIIT, and the Regional Colleges offer instruction in high school subjects under the Adult 10 and Adult 12 programs. Students in adult programs may be sponsored under the tuition free provincial programs or may pay tuition fees on their own for evening classes.

The GED program provides adults with a grade 12 equivalency using standardized tests of general knowledge gained through prior learning and experience. SIAST, the Regional Colleges, GDI, and others help people prepare to write the GED exams. SIAST, GDI, and Regional Colleges administer the exams.

In 2004/05, there were an additional 481 students enrolled in ABE at SIAST, Regional Colleges and DTI. The increased enrolments for 2004/05 were instituted as a measure to try to deal with the substantial waitlists.

The ABE curricula have been under redevelopment at the initiative of the department and in collaboration with providers. In part because of this redevelopment, and in part because of the work of the providers, many earlier problems associated with ABE appear to be in the process of being corrected. ABE is becoming a very flexible tool to address the gaps and needs of early school leavers. This includes providing for literacy training, essential skills, and high school completion. Students are being effectively supported in bridging to technical training and employment. ABE is evolving well in keeping with New Training Model principles. The department is to be commended for its support for continuous improvement in ABE.

There is, however, a continuing concern about the growing demand for ABE and about waitlists that exist in some places. The department has recently expanded its support for ABE training to accommodate more students. The Panel has repeatedly heard that school system performance must be improved if the demand for ABE is to decline. Many schools are undertaking improvements, but there is still much to be done. This is an area where the department, with its responsibility to ensure seamless transitions, needs to devote greater effort. The demands for people with the skills to work in the labour force of the future may not be sustainable if the training system must devote significant resources to compensating for the inability of schools to achieve literacy and essential work skills with their students. In the meantime, it is essential to continue the effort within the training system to provide the bridges to technical training and employment provided through ABE.

- ***Literacy:*** For adults needing to improve literacy and numeracy skills, SIAST, the Regional Colleges, DTI , SIIT and community-based organizations offer literacy development programs designed to meet learner's needs. Learners can develop skills to pursue more advanced learning opportunities. The ABE programs are designed to make literacy skills part of the learning continuum for learners facing literacy challenges.

SaskSmart is a new initiative designed to provide all Saskatchewan people with the basic literacies and essential skills they require in English, mathematics and science/technology. It is to build on the successes of existing literacy programs and services in the public, private, and volunteer sectors. The initiative will help provide a strong, coordinated approach to basic literacy and essential skills for learners throughout life. High levels of literacy benefit each individual and society collectively.

SaskSmart is intended to ensure that individuals have opportunities to acquire literacies and essential skills that are the key to ensuring economic and social inclusion and increased civic participation. High levels of literacy enhance personal well-being, provide access to future learning, help to sustain employability, enhance career development, and increase creativity and productivity.

It is expected the federal government will soon announce new initiatives with respect to literacy. This is very much desired. The literacy gap in Canada is much larger than is acceptable. A recent OECD study on Canada as a whole has provided a much need impetus. The results for individual provinces will soon be available, but were not available to the Panel during its work. It is expected that the results will confirm a serious literacy gap in the province.

New federal resources will provide welcome relief. SIAST, the Regional Colleges, DTI and SIIT have developed an enviable reputation in literacy training and essential skills development. More resources will permit the literacy gap to be addressed, including among those who have completed school but still need assistance, including training.

- ***Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):*** RPL is a broad umbrella concept for recognizing all types of learning that people have gained e.g., at home, school, work, and in the community. RPL includes:

    - Qualification Recognition – recognition for a completed degree, certificate, or diploma;
    - Credit Transfer – credit at one educational institution for courses or programs completed at another recognized institution; and,
    - Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition – assessment of an individual's knowledge and skill in relation to specific criteria.

The department has recently provided a policy statement in RPL. That policy states:

> "Learning does not always take place in the classroom: it also happens on the job, at home, and in the community through hands-on experience, volunteer

> work, military service, independent study, even leisure activities and travel. Often the skills acquired through these experiences can be applied to the skills or knowledge required in the workplace, at school, or elsewhere. Recognition of prior learning is a means by which all learning is recognized. It is a credible and practical process that looks at what a person knows and can do, and may lead to recognition for skills and knowledge regardless of how they were acquired. It is a way to address the challenges of skills identification and assessment in a knowledge-based economy where continuous learning must be encouraged and supported." (Saskatchewan Learning, *Recognition of Prior Learning*, 2005).

The department has set out in the policy a long list of specific things that could or should be done. The training system has begun the process of implementing the RPL policy. As a first step, Campus Saskatchewan is responsible for a newly formed Saskatchewan Council for Admissions and Transfer (SaskCAT). The SaskCAT is comprised of representatives from across the education system in the province. It has developed an online, publicly accessible credit transfer guide, launched in September 2005, and is undertaking to develop a "culture of transfer" in Saskatchewan in which the practice will be to find reasons to grant rather than deny transfer of credit and provide increased access to institutions and programs.

This is a good first step. There is a need to make further progress on an urgent basis. This is a matter to which we will return to when looking at system needs.

- ***JobStart/Future Skills:*** This program, introduced in 1995, provides training subsidies to employers who hire and train new workers on the job. SIAST and Regional Colleges work with employers to develop credit training which is certified by SIAST.

  The Quick Skills option provides funds to public training institutions to train the unemployed to meet industry requirements for skilled workers. Training is to lead to ongoing permanent employment. The program also provides access to credit training in rural and northern Saskatchewan. Priority is given to projects demonstrating strong prospects of ongoing employment for trainees, particularly for the designated groups. For programs lasting 12 weeks or more, trainees can apply for student loans. Under certain circumstances training allowances are also available for eligible trainees for programs that are less than 12 weeks.

  The objectives of this option are to provide the unemployed with recognized skills to gain employment; to provide a quick response by public training institutions to skill shortages in industry; to foster partnerships among training institutions, industry, employers, and government to prepare the unemployed for jobs in growth areas of the economy; and to provide access to credit training in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

Work-based Training for the Employed provides funding support to Saskatchewan employers in the manufacturing, processing, and agri-value sectors which need to retrain existing permanent employees in order to maintain or increase their competitive position.

The program also provides retraining support for employees facing permanent layoff or employees moving from part-time to permanent full-time employment. This part of the program is open to all employers.

Sector partnerships provide financial assistance to industry sectors that are important to the province's ability to compete in external markets. Funding is provided to implement partnerships with trainers and communities for human resource planning and the development of training approaches to meet industry skilled employment needs.

Work-based training for the unemployed provides financial assistance to employers to deliver recognized on-the-job-training for unemployed Saskatchewan residents and leads to permanent employment. Employers provide on-the-job training for new, full-time positions in the workplace. Eligible employers are registered Saskatchewan businesses, particularly in growth sectors of the provincial economy, such as agri-value, mining/minerals, energy, forestry, information technology and telecommunications and tourism and cultural industries. The program provides up to 50 per cent of approved training costs for each trainee, depending on the size of the business.

The Panel has concluded that the JobStart/FutureSkills program is extremely valuable. It simultaneously meets the needs of learners, employers and communities. It is flexible, learner-centered and decentralized. It addresses literacy and essential skills as well as technical skills. Some fear that it risks sacrificing the teaching of generic skills for non-transferable skills and the particular needs of particular employers. There is an element of validity to this. However, the problem needs to be rectified by an effective system of RPL and a real commitment by the system, including employers, to continuous learning. In the absence of such commitments, it is not acceptable to expect people either to forgo opportunities or to adapt to a rigid set of training arrangements that will not work for them.

This program works for learners. The New Training Model provides guidance on how it can be better integrated in lifelong learning. As it evolves, the JobStart/FutureSkills program will be an even more valuable tool. The demand is now greater than can be supported by the available funding and an expansion to the program is justified.

- ***Career Services:*** These services assist people in choosing the right career options for them. Career services support individuals in making informed decisions about their education, training, career and employment choices.

- ***Labour Market Information and Planning:*** Individuals and employers use labour market information to determine required skills and available workforce for current and future jobs. Government agencies and educational institutions use labour market information to assist in planning. Through a consultation process with various agencies, businesses, governments, and community organizations, SIAST, SATCC, and the Regional Colleges annually gather information on training needs specific to the locations they serve. Saskatchewan Job Futures is the result of a partnership between the federal and provincial governments. Since 1998, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Saskatchewan Learning have used this site jointly to publish important information about hundreds of Saskatchewan occupations. Learners (and potential learners) access labour market information through materials such as Student Loan Application packages, the *Sask Futures Job Chart* and *Aboriginal People at Work*, and the website SaskNetWork.ca. Labour market information is also available through the Saskatchewan Learning, Career Information Hotline.

  This Report will address some of the issues around labour market planning and information in Chapter 9.

- ***Emerging Program Issues:*** The trends across the colleges indicate an increasing need for learner services. Currently, learner support services are provided in the form of career counselling, testing and assessment, workshops on study skills, writing resumes, financial aid information and financial management, small group instruction and individualized tutoring, recognition of prior learning and portfolio development, university student advising, examination invigilation, and employability assistance for people with disabilities. Some colleges have started to integrate the use of Elders in their learner support services for Aboriginal students. The integration of colleges' learner services with the Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) is intended to provide seamless service to the public.

  Some of the emerging issues and challenges which are burdening the training system include the following:

  - growing numbers of multi-barriered clients are putting pressure on available counselling resources and increasing the need for personal (e.g., availability of student housing/residences, primarily in the north; daycare facilities, etc.) and academic supports (e.g., career counselling, assessment, tutoring, bridging programs, study skills, financial management skills, etc.);
  - increasing support is required for expanding numbers of technology enhanced learning (TEL) students;
  - increasing demand for recognition of prior learning; and,
  - learner and employer demand for increased flexibility in program delivery (e.g., programs start-up times; TEL; alternative schedules, etc.).

There are numerous systems issues that arise with respect to the above. These systems issues will be reviewed in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this report.

5.4 Other Related Institutions, Agencies and Organizations

- ***Dumont Technical Institute***

Dumont Technical Institute was established in 1992. It provides technical training to Saskatchewan's Métis. It serves as the adult upgrading and technical training arm of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research. DTI develops and delivers courses that build capacity in support of Métis self-government and strong, independent individuals and communities.

DTI delivers programs throughout the province. Many of these programs are community-based. DTI delivers programs in co-operation with other educational partners such as Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. (METSI), SIAST, SIIT and provincial Regional Colleges.

DTI is federated with SIAST. Under the terms of the DTI/SIAST Federation Agreement of 2000, the partners work to:

- Enhance access to and completion of technical education and adult upgrading by Métis individuals and communities;
- Enable collaborative planning between DTI and SIAST;
- Increase the involvement, decision making and accountability of Métis people in technical, adult upgrading and basic education; and,
- Facilitate the delivery of training programs by DTI to Métis communities.

DTI offers a wide range of programs in the area of adult basic education and skills training. The three main categories are as follows:

- Adult Basic Education - this includes basic literacy, grades 5-10 upgrading, and Adult 12 (level 30) courses;
- General Educational Development (GED) - preparation courses and testing for this international examination; and,
- Provincially Accredited Skills Training Programs - offered through the DTI/SIAST Federation Agreement.

DTI students may qualify for student sponsorships, including DTI sponsored courses and seats reserved for Métis students at SIAST and Saskatchewan's Regional Colleges; sponsorship by Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc.; and the Provincial Training Allowance. Students in eligible programs may also access the Canada-Saskatchewan Student Loans Program.

- ***Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)***

SIIT was first established in 1976 as the Saskatchewan Indian Community College. In 1985, the name of the College was changed to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. At that time, SIIT became one of the first post-secondary institutions in Canada to be governed by First Nations people.

SIIT initially delivered adult academic upgrading, introductory skills and trades, and basic management training to First Nations adults throughout the province. The programming mixture has evolved to include certified technical, vocational, and trade programming.

On July 1, 2000, provincial legislation recognized SIIT as a post-secondary institution under the *Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act*. The SIIT Act recognizes SIIT within both the Indian and non-Indian communities. It permits First Nations students to transfer credits to other post-secondary institutions and to have their certificates and diplomas recognized at the provincial level by both First Nation and non-First Nation employers.

Well-positioned to be the institution of choice for the growing numbers of First Nations youth, SIIT is undertaking a vigorous effort to meet the needs of First Nations communities. First Nations and non-First Nations governments, as well as the private sector, look to SIIT as a major contributor to a well qualified workforce. Linkage to economic opportunities is part of SIIT's strategic plan. For example, in response to continued growth in the construction sector, with a need for qualified Aboriginal employees, SIIT has been a major participant in two construction projects, one located in Regina, and the other in Saskatoon. It has just entered into a new partnership with Boeing Corporation. These projects emphasize both training and employment.

SIIT currently offers approximately 40 different programs at the certificate and diploma levels, as well as career services and employment bridging. These include some of the most challenging and high demand programs in the country. With a main campus in Saskatoon and operations at nine locations, SIIT works in partnership with numerous other institutions. It uses technology extensively and delivers numerous programs at the community level.

- ***Northern Labour Market Committee***

The Committee includes decision-makers from over 80 different agencies from training, funding, economic development, governments, Aboriginal agencies, and industry sectors operating in the northern region of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Learning provides administrative and financial support to the Committee, many of its subcommittees, and for special projects. Member agencies contribute their time as co-chairs and through their efforts on task-oriented subcommittees. The mandate of the Committee is to:

- Identify labour market, training, and economic development issues;
- Initiate special projects that are action- and results-oriented to address these issues;
- Coordinate and facilitate cooperative planning and actions among agencies;
- Provide a forum in which to exchange information; and,
- Prepare an annual profile of the labour market and industrial sectors in northern Saskatchewan to assist in program planning.

It has been responsible for a multi-party training initiative linking training to employment in the mineral sector. This initiative has won three national and provincial awards for innovation in partnerships. A 5-year cooperative, training-to-employment Forestry Partnership supports training and employment in forestry related occupations.

Local training councils assess community labour market issues and build linkages between training and employment. Strategic planning for the North takes place under the Education and Training Sub-Committee which facilitates a collaborative approach in the planning and delivery of post-secondary education in northern Saskatchewan. An annual regional training needs and labour market overview is prepared to assist program planners.

Over the course of its 22 years, the Northern Labour Market Committee has done much to engender a sense of co-operation among the labour market partners in the North. As well, it has promoted the development of an atmosphere in which training is valued as a key means to enable northern people to participate in the economic development of the province.

- ***Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN)***

SCN partners with Saskatchewan Learning, SIAST, the Regional Colleges, universities, and the public K-12 education system to deliver credit courses to over 250 classrooms in more than 200 communities. These televised classes provide people living in rural and remote areas with formal educational opportunities that might otherwise not exist. Post-secondary courses generally comprise scheduled live lectures, live televised interactive discussions, discussion periods among students at each site, telephone access to instructors, specially developed print packages and, for sites with six or more students, locally-based proctors to facilitate discussion and learning.

- ***Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board***

The Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board supports a learning culture in Saskatchewan. The Board encompasses the diverse perspectives of labour market partners from business, labour, education and training providers, agriculture, First

Nations, Métis, women, persons with disabilities, racialized Canadians, low income people, youth, and government). It promotes the development of workforce training programs that meet the needs of the individual and industry. It has a number of Reference Groups which select their representatives to the Board. Reference Groups provide the SLFDB with advice on labour market training issues from the perspective of their member organizations.

The SLFDB shares information and is a forum for dialogue between labour market partners. The Board provides advice to the federal and provincial governments on labour market issues.

- ***Campus Saskatchewan***

  Campus Saskatchewan is a partnership directed and managed by its members to support them in developing and advancing inter-institutional initiatives to achieve shared goals and priorities for the use of technology enhanced learning. Campus Saskatchewan members coordinate their efforts and collaborate to achieve the following:

  - increase the availability of courses and programs (currently have developed or are in the process of developing 300 online courses and learning resources);
  - remove barriers to enable students to complete programs;
  - enhance online and other technology enhanced learning services for students, including access to technology and technical services, advising and counselling, study supports, and library services;
  - develop and maintain a shared Website;
  - develop and undertake inter-institutional initiatives to enhance faculty development and support; and,
  - pursue cooperative arrangements with consortia or institutions in other jurisdictions.

  SIAST and the Regional Colleges, as well as the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, GDI/DTI, First Nations University of Canada and Saskatchewan Learning are all part of the Campus Saskatchewan Management Board. Campus Saskatchewan is funded by the Department of Learning through the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) fund.

- ***Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)***

  A Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) program has been in operation for over five years. It is a system wide program to support and encourage innovation in training through technology. It was initially guided by a five year plan which expired recently. The program has been supported by a TEL fund which has made money available to support the introduction of new and innovative approaches to learning throughout the public system. Saskatchewan Learning undertook an evaluation of the first five year plan, and on the basis of the review renewed the plan. The review concluded that the adoption of technology enhanced learning has made a positive contribution to training in the system. It suggests that the innovation based on technology has not proceeded as quickly as desired, but that the goals and activities under the plan need to continue.

- ***University classes***

The Regional Colleges and SIAST provide access to university courses in rural and northern Saskatchewan and the two urban centers which do not have a university (Moose Jaw and Prince Albert) through classroom and/or televised instruction (SCN), or technology enhanced learning (TEL). Access to an array of first-year university courses enables students to complete their first year in their home communities, and in a limited number of locations, some advanced level classes are provided.

- ***Provincial Aboriginal Representative Workforce Council (PARWC)***

The Council is made up of a group of individuals committed to supporting a provincial workforce representative of Aboriginal peoples. It is supported by the provincial government. Members represent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal training and educational institutions, employers, government and organized labour. It supports the development of a workforce to be achieved through partnerships in education, training, employment, and policy. The Council's principles include open and honest communication with one another to achieve common goals and to develop goals and strategies in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and dignity that reflect the vision and mandate of the Council. There is a commitment to work together in a spirit of co-operation and integration to achieve these goals. Partnership agreements which commit employers to prepare workplaces and to break down barriers are critical instruments for realizing success. Numerous agreements are in place and serving to advance the goals of PAWRC.

5.5 Agreements and Partnerships

- ***Saskatchewan Accord***

Premier Calvert announced on May 14, 2005, that the Province of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada had reached an agreement that an additional $210 Million would be provided over five years to create a workforce for tomorrow, a key theme of the Saskatchewan economic summit. This includes $90 million for labour market development/training and $120 million for higher education. Officials report that initial indications from the federal government suggest three-quarters of the higher education funding would go to students through loans and grants, while one-quarter of the funding would go to universities' infrastructure. The labour market development and training funding presents an opportunity to support investment in training priorities.

- ***Labour Market Development Agreement***

In late 1995, and during 1996, several actions by the federal government in the area of Employment Insurance and Labour Market Development were announced that enabled Saskatchewan to take an expanded role in the delivery of human resource development services to Employment Insurance clients. In November 27, 1995, federal withdrawal from labour market training was promised by the Prime Minister, recognizing that labour market training relates to provincial responsibility for education.

On February 6, 1998, the Canada-Saskatchewan Agreement on Labour Market Development (LMDA) was signed. This agreement enabled Saskatchewan to assume responsibility for the design and delivery of active employment benefits and support measures, supported by Employment Insurance funds. Currently, Saskatchewan Learning and the Department of Community Resources and Employment have joint responsibility for the administration of the LMDA.

Under this agreement Saskatchewan assumed responsibility for financing and delivering all direct programs and services to this group, including the employment of staff and the operation of offices. The agreement led to the creation of 20 Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) centers managed by the provincial government. These one-stop-shop offices provide career and employment services for EI clients, social assistance recipients, and Saskatchewan citizens. Staff work with employers and agencies to identify job opportunities for clients. They also work with training institutions, community-based organizations, municipalities, and the private sector to prepare clients for employment. Local and regional non-governmental organizations provide some employment and career development services under contract to the centers.

Originally, the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training managed the centers. In 2002, the operation of the CSCES centers was transferred to the Department of Community Resources and Employment. Training related programs remained with Saskatchewan Learning, including: JobStart/Future Skills, apprenticeship training, basic education, sectoral training and partnerships, and financial assistance to individuals through the Provincial Training Allowance, Skills Training Benefit and apprentices' living allowances. The federal funds are to be used only to support persons on EI or persons who have had an active claim in the last three years (known as EI reachback clients). Other persons in need of such programs and services are to be covered from funds provided by the provincial government.

The LMDA is essentially an administrative transfer of a portion of the federal government's obligations to Employment Insurance clients to the province. Similar transfer arrangements exist with other provinces.

The LMDA serves provincial interests by reducing a certain amount of overlap and duplication, making it simpler and easier for clients to access training and employment services. It is not clear whether the province has gained financially, but a cursory examination suggests not (improved service increases utilization, which increases costs). Such cost increments are not provided for under the Agreement. This is not to suggest that the Agreement does not serve Saskatchewan's interests in a more general sense of improving services for Saskatchewan citizens in need of such services. The LMDA is currently being evaluated and a report is expected in 2006.

For the 2005-06 fiscal year, Human Resources Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) will transfer $39.009M in LMDA program funds to the province for the delivery of an array of provincial programs and services. Saskatchewan estimates that 11,380 EI clients will be served under the LMDA in 2005-2006.

- ***Canada-Saskatchewan Integration Agreement for the Harmonization and Administration of the Federal and Provincial Student Loans Programs.***

  This Agreement, signed on June 12, 2001, extends to all Saskatchewan student loans and all Canada student loans available to Saskatchewan students after August 1, 2001. Support extends to those taking approved training.

  The Agreement establishes the terms and conditions of the Canada-Saskatchewan Integrated Student Loans, supported by both parties, to be delivered by Canada and Saskatchewan to post-secondary students residing in Saskatchewan. The Agreement is intended to simplify the loan program for Saskatchewan students.

5.6 Relationship between the Training System and the K-12 System

There is no system-wide formal relationship between these two systems other than the linkages provided by Saskatchewan Learning. However, students who enter the training system have at some point in the past been part of the K-12 system, and the impact of skills learned during primary and secondary school have significant impact on an individual's success in both accessing and completing post-secondary training. Many presenters expressed concern about the K-12 system in terms of inadequate career counselling (discussed elsewhere in this report) and the level of academic achievement by both students leaving the system prior to graduation and graduates. Presenters specifically identified inadequate literacy levels and a general lack of essential workplace skills.

The level of interaction and partnership between the K-12 system and the training system varies by institution and location. In some areas, it was cited as being very satisfactory and in others as being unsatisfactory. Virtually all presenters supported the concept that the training system and the schools need to be closely linked. Successful recruitment and retention of students within the training system is at least partially due to the level of academic success attained by students within the K-12 system.

5.7 Specific System-wide Concerns

Waitlists for ABE: An ongoing issue for ABE is the length of the waitlists. Waitlists were identified as problematic at SIAST, the Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIIT. The Department of Learning indicated there are 2,300 discrete individuals on ABE waitlists across the province. Waiting time varies by program and area; however, Learning reports wait times for pre-10 or literacy programs can be up to three years. Increased intake into ABE is limited by availability of PTA funding for student income support. The majority of the ABE waitlisted candidates at the Regional Colleges are Aboriginal people.

Capacity: Capacity issues are an ongoing challenge for both SIAST and the Regional Colleges. Capacity is limited by funding to deliver programs, physical space, and access to student income support. The training system has issues with all three of these limitations.

Both classroom/lab and office space are problematic for much of the system; however, the status of physical space at Northlands College is severe. Both Northlands College and North West Regional College have identified that while expanded student capacity is required to meet the needs employers, this is unlikely without the provision of student housing.

5.8 Saskatchewan Learning: Impacts and Outcomes

The Panel is of the view that Saskatchewan Learning has done a good job in providing leadership to the system and in putting into place programs and services to support an effective training system. The last decade has been one of considerable activity in the training system as the federal government has re-positioned itself and as demands and needs from both learners and employers have rapidly evolved.

It is particularly worthy of note that Saskatchewan Learning has been a leader in establishing programs and creating initiatives in support of the New Training Model. Some of these have been somewhat late in initiation, as in the case of RPL, and some have been somewhat slow to develop, as in the case of technology enhanced learning. However, the overall array of programs is appropriate. So too is the architecture of the system in terms of institutions and organizations.

The department has identified some of the areas that require more and continuing effort. These include leadership and strategic development, lifelong learning and career development, literacy and essential skills, capacity, and responsiveness to labour market needs. These are essentially system needs and will be addressed in that context in later sections of the report.

SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and DTI are active providers of Saskatchewan Learning programs such as JobStart/Future Skills and ABE. In other parts of our report, we have reported favourably on these programs and urged an expansion in financial support for them. The Panel supports expanded activity by all providers in these important program areas.

There is a need for government to become much more supportive of the unique First Nations and Métis initiatives. Aboriginal youth have been identified as a strategic advantage for Saskatchewan's labour force and economy. Aboriginal controlled institutions and partnerships will be critical to success. So too will the Regional Colleges and SIAST. Many issues related to these questions will be addressed in later parts of the report.

Within the government, the department must be proactive and create a sense of urgency and priority for training and especially for training for Aboriginal people. This is the main priority that the Panel sees for the department.

The Panel recommends:

7. **The overall provincial program/service framework which supports learners and employers to participate in training remain intact.**

8. **The institutional and agency architecture of the system generally remain intact, subject to some minor changes referenced in other parts of the report.**

9. **Saskatchewan Learning proactively create a sense of urgency and priority for training within the government and the province.**

10. **That Saskatchewan Learning place a priority on ensuring that the New Training Model takes primacy over other considerations and that the related matters raised in other parts of this report, including leadership and strategic development, lifelong learning and career development, literacy and essential skills, capacity, and responsiveness to labour market needs, be recognized as priorities.**

11. **Support for Adult Basic Education and Literacy be recognized as a priority and increased in order to increase participation in further training and entry into the workforce.**

12. **Support of Technology Enhanced Learning remain a priority of Saskatchewan Learning.**

13. **JobStart/Future Skills remain a priority and support be increased.**

14. Saskatchewan Learning work in partnership with the unique First Nations and Métis institutions (Dumont Technical Institute/Gabriel Dumont Institute and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies), to provide leadership to mobilize increasing numbers of Aboriginal people to participate in training and employment.

15. Unique northern capacity issues be addressed.

6

System Issues of Coordination and Fragmentation: Closing the Gaps

Chapter 6: System Issues of Coordination and Fragmentation: Closing the Gaps

6.1 Introduction

> From a very early age, we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world. This apparently makes complex tasks and subjects more manageable, but we pay a hidden, enormous price. We can no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of connection to the larger whole. When we then try to "see the big picture," we try to reassemble the fragments in our minds, to list and organize all the pieces. But, the task is futile, similar to trying to reassemble the fragments of a broken mirror to see a true reflection. Thus, after a while we give up trying to see the whole altogether (Senge, 1990).

In undertaking to review training from a system perspective, the Panel has had to examine the obvious question of what is meant by a system, at least in this context.

A system is an interlocking set of institutions and actors, each of whom is dependent on the strategies and actions of the others in getting to where they want to go. A system has unity of purpose, with each making a contribution to the achievement of the common purposes. There is, thus, a high degree of dependency on one another in the sense that co-operation and coordination are essential in maximizing value. Systems are defined as much by the relationships between the actors and the institutions as they are by the actors and institutions themselves. The relationships are essentially a set of rules and expectations about what should and can be done, and understandings about how to do these various things.

A system suffers if there are disputes about vision and goals, ineffective leadership and direction, ineffective planning, poor collaboration leading to fragmentation, unclear and conflicting mandates, jurisdictional disputes, lack of recognition of outcomes of other parts, and eligibility distinctions unrelated to the purposes of the system. For a system to work it should be seamless from the perspective of those served. This is particularly important in the training system with its focus on learners, continuous learning, and Recognition of Prior Learning. The NTM relies on seamlessness. The system must be judged on that basis.

6.2 Coordination, Strategic Planning and System Policy

From a system perspective, there are important system needs that must be met. The first and perhaps most important of these needs are processes for effective planning and policy making. Planning and policy making provide the overall coordination that helps to ensure that actions within the system are geared to the common purposes and are organized to enhance the contributions of others. A system that has the processes to do these effectively will be coherent and coordinated.

Many of those who met with and made submissions to the Panel expressed concern about the overall planning and policy making processes within the system. The Panel has examined these concerns and is in substantial agreement with the concerns. In our view, the system lacks an overall coordinating capacity capable of doing the kinds of things needed to be done to ensure that system requirements are effectively met. The Panel is concerned that the system has not responded quickly enough over the past five years to expand the output of trained people. The Panel is concerned that the number of First Nations and Métis people participating continues to be too low, and that many community, regional and industry needs are not getting sufficient attention. The Panel is also concerned about the ability of the system to work together collectively to meet these needs and the other goals set out in the above.

Strategic planning is essential for a complex system such as the training system. The existing strategic planning and policy processes are not robust enough and not inclusive enough to be fully effective. Those with intimate contact with the system were heard and considered, but much of this contact is at the program and institutional level. The higher level planning and policy making is undertaken without the active participation of many of the key actors, including major parts of the industrial and business sectors. It also takes place without complete access to and the full ability to use data that is required. There are many processes for acquiring and organizing data within the system, much of it is relevant to strategic planning and policy making. However, a considerable amount of the relevant data cannot be used in an effective fashion given the structure and processes for coordination and integration.

The existing processes for strategic planning and policy making are quite decentralized. This is in many ways a good thing. However, the ultimate responsibility for the system rests with the Minister, and such a decentralized system does not consistently serve the Minister well. The Minister needs the support of a system with sufficient central coordination to develop effective strategic plans and policy advice. There is also a need to ensure that plans and policies are effectively articulated and communicated. The Panel has found that many key actors either do not know or do not understand the priorities of the training system or where they fit within the system. It also has found that some very important and worthwhile policies were not known or understood by some of the key actors, thus reducing the effectiveness of the system.

The Panel has found that there is need for improvements in those existing institutional processes and structures that provide coordination, planning, and policy development. This is not to suggest that what exists now is badly failing. All of the key institutions develop business plans and other planning documents. The Institutions Branch, Saskatchewan Learning works in a collaborative manner with the post-secondary public institutions, other government departments and agencies, and private vocational schools, to facilitate co-operation and collaboration and to support strategic planning in keeping with the long-term goals and objectives articulated by government for post-secondary education and training in the province.

This approach, combined with the work done by the senior executive of the department and the Minister, has made it possible to have a system that has accomplished a great deal. However, the system is now confronted by extraordinary demands from the labour force and the complexity and challenges involved in meeting these demands.

In most respects, the Panel finds that the architecture of the overall system and the configuration of institutions that have developed over the past few years is not in need of major renovation. There are problems in the system and challenges that must be met, but these are not because of the absence of key institutions. The Minister of Learning will be the key to making the system work to the maximum of its capacity consistent with the goals and objectives we have set out. The Minister needs the best possible organization at the overall system level if strategic planning is going to maximize opportunities and if policy advice is to be the best possible. The Minister and the government are responsible for ensuring common needs are served and planning is responsive to government and Ministerial needs in fulfilling that responsibility. This includes ensuring that there is effective coordination, based on a shared vision, within the system.

What is needed are structures and processes that yield the best possible results from an overall system perspective while leaving the institutions and others free to do their jobs with as much independence as possible. In the language of the New Public Management, there needs to be effective engagement at the top of the system to ensure that the "steering" (planning and policy) functions are done well, and that the "rowing" (implementation) functions can be carried out by the institutions with clarity about roles, rules, and expectations.

Thus, the Panel proposes that a possible re-alignment be undertaken within the system to address higher level co-ordination, strategic planning, and policy advisory issues. Specifically, the Panel proposes a new council with a new mandate and altered membership.

The Panel believes that new and improved planning and coordination is required for the system. As has already been argued, the Saskatchewan labour market is about to enter a "perfect storm" with a convergence of factors and events unprecedented in labour markets. The largest burden for successfully managing the transition is going to fall on the training system. There is no room for waste and inefficiency. Duplication, overlap, and other aspects of fragmentation must be avoided. Gaps that cause the system to lose effectiveness must be acted upon quickly. All the key parties required for success must have a high degree of participation and ownership. Information must be acquired and used to maximum affect.

The Panel is not suggesting the governance of the system be changed, at least in conventional terms. Other than specific cases referenced in other parts of the report, the

Panel does not believe that new forms of institutional governance are needed. It also does not see any great need for dramatic reorganization within the system.
In order to better understand the needs and the possibilities, the Panel has turned to a management concept known as "horizontality". It has drawn upon the general work of the former Canadian Center for Management Development in Ottawa.[6] The work of the Center suggests that horizontality exists when one or several organizations address a question not exclusively on the basis of preoccupations for which they are responsible, but from a wider perspective embracing interests, resources, and constraints of other stakeholders.

In its most authentic expression, horizontal management implies that anyone that is part of a system, upon reflecting on a case, formally asks itself who else has interests in such a case and undertakes to encompass those organizations or those persons in an overall engagement. This approach differs radically from the traditional silo approach since it considers "others" no longer as potential competitors but as partners. Actors give priority to general interests over particular recognition.

Horizontal management is intended to be very broad in order to encompass segments of a larger system. With horizontal management, the need in the training system can be perceived more clearly than ever, the benefits of synergies are better recognized, the multidimensional side of the model is undeniable, together with the intra-system and inter-system character of actions. Further, issues involve increasingly diversified actors, the actions of some stakeholders influence the agendas of others, and citizen demand that overlaps and redundancies are replaced by complementarity and synergy.

Horizontality is fundamentally about organizational culture and behaviour, with leadership becoming something that is shared around a common vision and a common commitment. It is not achieved through organizational structures and central authority. It is shared and cooperative. It can be encouraged and facilitated through processes for engagement, but only works on the basis of mutual commitment.

Horizontal management completes but does not replace hierarchical models. It becomes day-after-day more essential to organizations that must learn to live with it optimally. It can become popular provided that it meets real needs (and not the desire to be fashionable), a convinced perception of interests, a favourable context, realistic material means, and true support of directions.

The Panel is of the view that there is a need for an enhanced process of horizontal management in the training system. This is not to suggest that the leadership primacy and responsibility of Saskatchewan Learning and the Minister should be diluted.
The recommendations are fundamentally seen as enhancing the coherency and effectiveness of that leadership.

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[6] Jacques Bourgault and René Lapierre. Horizontality and Public Management. Ottawa. Canadian Center for Management Development, December 2000.

The idea that the training system needs an overarching framework is not new. British Columbia has recently taken an initiative to address somewhat similar concerns. The Industry Training Authority[7] (ITA), a new provincial government agency, became operative in early 2004, with legislated responsibility to govern and develop the industry training system in British Columbia. The ITA is to work with industry, people who are pursuing training, and training providers to develop an approach that will effectively meet industry training needs. The ITA aims to increase the number of people in industry training by 30% over the next three years, by improving completion rates, and by creating greater flexibility within the industry training system (ITA, 2005).

The ITA is to work with stakeholders to ensure there is a clear focus on industry and labour market needs. People pursuing training are to be provided with more flexible options to gain skills and credentials, through such approaches as modular training and competency-based evaluation. New credentials are being developed to better meet current needs.

The ITA has assumed responsibility for the British Columbia apprenticeship program which will be reconfigured accordingly. The program now works within the overall authority and industry panels providing advice and direction consistent with the new direction.

The ITA is governed by a nine-person Board of Directors, whose members come from diverse sectoral backgrounds and have broad expertise regarding industry needs and training approaches. A 10-member staff carries out the day-to-day work of the ITA.

The Panel considered a model similar to that of British Columbia to ensure that the NTM provides a unified direction for the training system. It proposes a somewhat different approach for Saskatchewan. The BC model does not have the overall system focus that we would like to see here. Further, its status as an authority runs the danger of creating further fragmentation rather than integration.

The Panel sees the need to focus on leadership and collaboration. It believes Saskatchewan's needs will be better served by a re-deployment of resources and the creation of a new leadership council in the training system for the following purposes:

1. To encourage and support increased coordination and integration within the training system. Some suggested activities would include:

    - To undertake regular assessments of the system to identify barriers to effective co-operation and integration and to advise the system on solutions;
    - To identify inefficiencies in the system and to recommend remedies to the parties involved;
    - To convene an annual meeting of the CEO's and Principals of all of the institutions to review coordination and integration problems; and,

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[7] British Columbia Industry Training Authority, 2005.

- To report annually on the state of progress in advancing prior learning assessment and recognition, and in breaking down the barriers to continuous learning created by unnecessary reliance on credentials.

2. To develop and provide to the Minister a system wide strategic plan for the training system, updated annually. The strategic plan would provide priorities and plans to achieve:

    - Enhanced access and participation in training in keeping with the skills needed to support the province's economic development and labour market needs;
    - Greater inclusiveness to advance equity and improve participation levels in training;
    - Higher participation by First Nations and Métis people in training;
    - Increased decentralization of training to rural and northern areas, homes, and workplaces;
    - Increased flexibility of programs and activities to enhance a focus on learner based training;
    - Adherence to and advancement of provincial goals and plans for technology enhanced learning;
    - Expansion of prior learning assessment and recognition;
    - Improved engagement with industry, and in the creation of industry sector plans and partnerships;
    - Improved career advisory services for young people in school, and career and labour market information services more generally;
    - Improved information systems and accountability; and,
    - Other objectives the Minister may from time to time set out.

3. To convene periodic training summits to bring together all of the key institutions and stakeholders, including a broad cross-section of industry and other employers. The training summit would:

    - Identify key issues from the perspective of employers, workers, communities and individuals;
    - Review the strategic plan outlined in the above; and,
    - Provide advice to the Minister regarding priorities and policies.

4. Provide policy advice to the Minister, including with respect to those matters itemized in the above with respect to the strategic plan.

5. Undertake projects that encourage innovation and best practices in the training system, including with respect to employment and career services.

6. Ensure that the New Training Model guides the future development of the system and all of its constituent parts.

The membership of the new council should reflect its responsibilities and should include representatives of the institutions, employers, communities, workers, and educators. The Department of Learning should be represented, preferably at the Deputy Minister level. All members should be appointed by the Minister.

The chair should be named by the Minister on the basis of unique knowledge and understanding the system and non-affiliation with any particular interest. Alternatively, the council could be co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Learning and another member named by the Minister.

Each member would be expected to devote their time and energies related to council work to the mission of system wide coordination, planning and advice. To be successful the council must engage with all parts of the system, and ensure that all relevant voices are heard and respected. To enhance its functioning, the council may want to establish reference groups relating to particular groups for which enhanced communication and participation is needed. A small secretariat would be required to assist the council.

The Council will to some extent need to be experimental. We heard an almost universal demand for something of this sort from those with whom we met. However, it needs development and testing. For this reason, the Panel is of the view that it be established with a "sunset" provision. Too many coordinating bodies that have not proved successful, continue in existence because the parties become too heavily invested in a process, and while useful, is not meeting original expectations. The Panel suggests that the Council have a five-year life, subject to extension if it is successful in meeting its mandate.

The next two to five years will be critical in determining whether the training system as it is now configured is capable of meeting the monumental challenges associated with an aging workforce, a need for a high level of skills and knowledge in the workplace, declining numbers of entrants to the workforce from the non-Aboriginal population, increasing numbers of Aboriginal young people, and increased economic growth potential in highly competitive sectors of the economy. A major part of the burden of achieving success must be assigned to the council. If it is not successful, it should be dissolved and other alternatives pursued.

The Panel recommends:

16. **System coordination, direction and leadership be given high priority over the next five years.**

17. **The concept of "horizontal management" be adopted by SIAST, Regional Colleges and SATCC to meet the concerns the Panel has recognized.**

18. A Saskatchewan Training System Planning and Coordinating Council be established by the Minister, in accordance with the principles outlined above, and that:

- **Membership and support be such as to ensure that the Council be functional, capable of playing a central coordinating and advisory role, and respected by the key players in the training system; and**
- **The performance of the Council be reviewed, by a person appointed by the Minister, in the summer of 2008. The review should include a comparison of the Saskatchewan outcomes and impacts with those of the British Columbia model. Based on the findings of the review, the Council should be adapted or changed to ensure it has maximum effect.**

6.3 Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is essential to achieve effectiveness in the New Training Model. It goes well beyond credit transfers. Recognition of Prior Learning is a systematic process that assesses and recognizes an individual's knowledge and skills regardless of where or how the learning was acquired. Within a post-secondary learning system, a RPL process generally involves the assessment of experiential learning for educational credit or occupational certification with reference to the standards of the credential granting body. Experiential learning can be non-formal (e.g., workplace-based training, noncredit courses) or informal (e.g., learning resulting from life experience, workplace-based learning, hobbies, volunteer activities, family chores, etc).

Recognition of Prior Learning has been increasingly acknowledged as a valuable tool that can be used to effectively address the challenges of skill identification and assessment in a knowledge-based economy where continuous learning is encouraged and supported. But it is more than an assessment tool. In September 2001, the Conference Board of Canada estimated that eliminating the learning recognition gap in Canada would enable Canadians to earn an additional $4.1B to $5.9B in income annually. Without appropriate recognition of their skills and abilities, many highly skilled people remain unemployed or underemployed. As a result, they are inclined to move elsewhere ("the brain drain") to increase their earning power and career prospects by accessing improved learning recognition systems.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides for recognition of what is already in the skill set of the learner. If utilized, it permits the learner to proceed more quickly, at less cost, and under less rigid constraints, to work that utilizes him or her to full potential. It permits employers to be less constrained by rigid adherence to credentials and more able to recruit and assist with training based on the actual skills and knowledge of the employee.

On June 15, 2004, the Minister of Learning adopted a new provincial policy framework on recognizing prior learning. The policy framework stated "Recognition of prior learning is a means by which all learning is recognized. It is a credible and practical process that looks at what a person knows and can do, and may lead to recognition of skills and knowledge, regardless of how they were acquired."

We have been told that some progress is being made with a relatively new Saskatchewan Council for Admissions and Transfers (SaskCAT) which is working to ensure greater recognition of credits for courses within the school, colleges, and university sectors. We have also been told that the process is still quite limited and does not have the structure, status, and authority that is found in more established systems such as in British Columbia.

Credit transfer is just one part of a meaningful approach. An even greater challenge exists in attempting to assess and integrate into the learning program of a student, in a way that recognizes time as valuable and costly to the student, what a person knows and can do based on studies not part of the traditionally recognized offerings and experiential learning from home, workplace, organization, or community. As the need for trained people becomes more pressing and employers and others move to fill this need through measures not encompassed within the formal system, this problem will become ever more challenging.

The Saskatchewan training system has a long way to go before it can be said to be based on a robust recognition of prior learning. The problem in part is that RPL is not really about programs. It is about an embedded approach that must penetrate the system as a whole and that extends through to employers. It really is one of those things that cannot be achieved without the whole system rowing together. Achieving this will require real leadership and commitment.

A full commitment to RPL is not primarily about money, but some money will be needed. It primarily requires vision, imagination, and commitment. It can be made to work if all of the parts of the system are committed and engaged. The real priority must be to get that commitment. Saskatchewan Learning and all parts of the system must take this on as a matter of highest priority. It is one of the keys to the New Training Model becoming a reality. It may, in the Saskatchewan context, be the most important key to doing so.

The Panel recommends:

19. **All institutions, policies and programs within the system make a priority commitment to full implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).**

20. **Information and education be undertaken with employers to gain an understanding of and commitment to RPL.**

6.4 Technology and Technology Enhanced Learning

Technology has become an important tool in achieving flexible, relevant, and accessible learning. The internet has revolutionized the way many things are done in society. It, along with video conferencing and satellite and high speed data transmission, will have a huge impact on learning and technical training in particular.

Saskatchewan Learning has had a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Action Plan since 2000. The Plan has recently been renewed for another five years.

The TEL Action Plan was established to guide priorities, activities, and investments in technology enhanced learning. The vision of TEL set out in the plan states "Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training sector works collaboratively to make appropriate use of technology to serve the learning needs of all residents of the province by enhancing the quality of programs and extending access." The Action Plan was originally intended to be in place for five years.

The TEL Action Plan drew upon past experience with interactive television and video conferencing. It also tried to look to the use of online technologies and applications which fit with the development of the internet.

The goals of the plan in 2000 were quite focused on improving training for northern, rural, and Aboriginal learners, and in contributing to technology related experience and knowledge in the province.

A review of the implementation of the plan was undertaken in 2005. The authors of the review are generally complementary about the work done in implementing the plan, but nevertheless, express an underlying skepticism about how vigorously the system pursued implementation. Some of the findings include:

- The Plan has generally been implemented as intended, recognizing that cultural and institutional change can be slow processes. Reasons for this include: (within most institutions) little initial activity/experience with TEL; lack of planning/governance processes in place and slow buy-in on the part of some institutions to support the kind pace of change originally envisioned in the TEL Action Plan, and challenges in implementing the collaborative model.

- Still, many Indigenous learners live in remote communities that do not yet have access to the technological infrastructure required for online courses. For Aboriginal institutions, smaller scale operations, limited technological infrastructure, and stretched human resources have made full participation a challenge.

- The cadre of faculty currently involved in TEL represents a modest proportion of instructional staff overall. Workload is the most significant barrier to participate in TEL and faculty has mixed views about their institution's support for TEL.

- The most extensive activity under the TEL Action Plan, particularly in the area of content development, has been within the province's two universities and SIAST (these institutions receive the lion's share of the funding and most of the province's learners enrolled in credit post-secondary courses are registered with one of them). The role of the Regional Colleges is evolving to be one of learner support.

- The report finds that learners at off-campus locations respond very favourably to courses offered using TEL and that learning is not negatively impacted. The evaluation is very positive about the further development of TEL.

- Campus Saskatchewan is a partnership of Saskatchewan's public post-secondary institutions with support from Saskatchewan Learning, the purpose of which is to develop and advance inter-institutional initiatives to achieve shared goals and priorities in the field of technology enhanced learning. These goals and priorities as stated by the Campus Saskatchewan Management Board, are:

  - co-operation in planning and setting priorities;
  - optimal sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources; and,
  - maximal opportunities for student mobility, flexibility and accessibility.

In order to achieve these objectives, the intention is that Campus Saskatchewan will:

- Increase the availability of courses and programs, particularly in rural, northern and Aboriginal communities.
- Remove barriers to enable students to complete programs.
- Enhance on-line and other technology enhanced learning services for students.
- Develop and undertake inter-institutional initiatives to enhance faculty development and support, and collaborative research in technology enhanced learning.
- Pursue cooperative arrangements with consortia or institutions in other jurisdictions that enhance or support the technology enhanced learning programs and services offered by the member institutions.

The goals and objectives of Campus Saskatchewan are entirely consistent with the New Training Model. Indeed a more rapid adoption of TEL is essential if it is to realize its full potential. With the introduction of the New Training Model and the decentralization of training it is essential that the Regional Colleges are included within Campus Saskatchewan as full partners with the same rights, privileges and opportunities as the other members.

The Panel believes that the pace of adoption of technology enhanced learning must be accelerated in the training system. A number of good things are happening. Saskatchewan Learning has devoted $17 million to technology enhanced learning over the past five years. CommunityNet is providing wide-area network, including high speed internet access to all schools and Regional Colleges. A provincial video conferencing system will be developed on CommunityNet. SaskTel is moving to provide wireless high speed internet to areas not now served. Saskatchewan should be soon the most connected jurisdiction in the world.

Saskatchewan Communications Network's (SCN) E-Learning Network (ELN), a closed circuit television satellite network, delivers credit programs for Saskatchewan Learning. This infrastructure distributes video, audio, online, streaming and other technologies to provide formal education opportunities to Saskatchewan residents in underserved remote and rural communities. Approximately 200 remote communities have the capacity to receive televised classes. Distance learners benefit from this blended technology approach (television, phone/fax, print and internet). Saskatchewan Learning supports ELN to enable the teaching of courses that are not otherwise available at these locations. Over 250 schools and colleges receive distance programming via the televised ELN. Demand for programming is increasing – over the last three years the number of classrooms equipped to receive the ELN has risen by 7% per year.

Saskatchewan Communications Network is one of five regional education networks in Canada operating under the federal Broadcast Act. We have been told that there is considerable opportunity for increasing the use of the network to offer training courses. There are few if any technical obstacles in the way. Some of the barriers to doing so include the following:

- A lack of understanding of the potential capacity for and effectiveness of broadcast and e-learning by managers and instructors in the system.
- A lack of resources to develop courses and course materials needed to expand the available offerings through broadcast and e-learning.
- A lack of additional satellite time needed to expand increase course offerings. Satellite time is determined on the basis of an annual block of time purchased from the satellite by Saskatchewan Learning.

Saskatchewan Communications Network purchases a block of satellite time to deliver these programs based on support from Saskatchewan Learning. The current policy of the department is to support the purchase of about 55% of the time available on the satellite. That time is fully subscribed by existing programs and, thus, any expansion in program offerings would require that the Department purchase an increased block of time on the satellite beyond the existing 2,500 hours per year. The time block that it has is now fully used up for the course programming delivered.

Campus Saskatchewan is intended to be a support to further enhance technology-based learning in support of the new five year plan. The Panel is concerned that it may not have the status and capacity to do the things that have been set out for it. Campus Saskatchewan is a collaboration involving the post-secondary institutions. The Panel fears that the rate of adoption of TEL may be slowed by resistance and lack of full commitment by the universities which do not face the same pressures as the training system. The training system should not be constrained by barriers that are located within the universities. The Panel does not expect that the universities will embrace the NTM in their own educational practices to any great degree. The universities should be left to adapt at their own pace. Declining enrolments and the competition for students will eventually force them to innovate out of self-interest.

In the meantime, the focus should be on the training system. Resources need to be committed to support course and program development. While the Panel does not generally believe that conditional funding should be needed to achieve results, the use of rigorous performance and accountability measures should accompany funding. The whole system needs to make a commitment to its use as a tool of increasing access and meeting the needs of learners. The Panel also supports findings which show that the affordability of providing training can be greatly enhanced through its use.

One means of increasing the rate of adoption of TEL is to provide incentive bonuses for those who make rapid gains in the adoption and use of TEL. This could be incorporated into SIAST and Regional Colleges funding arrangements.

The Panel recommends:

21. **The Regional Colleges have a minimum of one representative on the Campus Saskatchewan Board. This representative would have the same rights, privileges and opportunities as the other Board members.**

22. **The training system commit to increased use of technology enhanced learning as a critical strategy in meeting the challenges of the next five years.**

23. **Campus Saskatchewan be empowered to provide leadership and direction, through a separate division unrelated to the universities, to the training system and further that Saskatchewan Learning provide additional funding available for SIAST, Regional Colleges, and DTI on the basis of measurable and accountable commitments to increase the development of courses and programs based on TEL. Failure to meet the stated commitments will result in funding reductions.**

24. **Saskatchewan Learning consider a new funding model where innovation, including the introduction and use of TEL, is rewarded on the basis of increasing enrolments.**

6.5 Labour Market Responsiveness

Another key factor in ensuring that the training system works well is that of assessing and responding effectively and efficiently to labour force demands. In part, this depends upon the flexibility and responsiveness of the institutions. However, it also depends upon the processes for acquiring and assessing labour market information. Being responsive to labour market demand depends upon all of the partners in the system working to gather and analyze information about the changing skills requirements. This information must then be used to identify specific training requirements and plans to meet those requirements. This requires collaboration and coordination to work well.

Labour Market Information (LMI) is the body of knowledge that describes employment, unemployment, and the factors that relate to labour demand and supply. The Federal/ Provincial/Territorial Strategic Vision for LMI, 2000[8] defined LMI as "information needed to make a labour market decision. This includes career, occupational, learning and labour market information used by those looking for work, those currently employed, employers, those who provide services, and people in general to make careful decisions about the labour market and about the transitions which affect their lives."

This definition captures information not normally associated with the labour market, but which impacts on labour market decisions. Labour Market Information is the basis for informed decision-making, and is essential to ensuring a responsive and sustainable training sector and labour market. In addition to supporting labour market planning, LMI is used for human resource planning, career development planning, and education and training course planning by a wide range of users.

The labour market planning cycle must be part of the overall strategic plan for the training system. Labour Market Information supports the planning, development, and implementation of the array of programs, services and delivery strategies to meet the education and training needs of the province. Processes are needed to engage the system in coordinated and integrated labour market planning and information processes at the regional, sectoral, and provincial levels. The model describes how labour market planning and information should work within the Saskatchewan post-secondary sector. It is comprised of four primary functions that include: Planning Partnerships; Labour Market Information; Assessment and Prioritization; and, Program and Service Planning.

At the present time, there are a considerable number of processes involved in gathering information to facilitate the meeting of labour market needs. SIAST conducts annual training needs assessments in the four major cities, and the Regional Colleges do the same for each of their regions. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) undertakes a considerable amount of work in evaluating and providing information on labour market needs. The Saskatchewan Labour Market Network (SLMN) has provided an opportunity for a more inclusive and coordinated approach to labour market planning and information that accommodates flexibility and individuality, sharing of best practices, and it collectively addresses emerging issues.

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[8] *Federal/ Provincial/Territorial Strategic Vision for LMI, 2000*

There is also a variety of labour market information that is gathered through various processes in the training sector such as the Sector Partnerships Program (SPP), regional and urban needs assessments, SaskJobs, and HRSDC's National Labour Market Information System. This information is generally gathered through primary research such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, and administrative databases. The SATCC has a provincial mandate to ensure that apprenticeship training meets industry's labour market needs by matching the skills needed for current and future jobs, increasing access to youth and underrepresented groups, and providing flexible and innovative training.

The SPP partnerships undertake primary research to identify and assess occupational and labour market demand, skill shortages and education, and training and employment requirements and availability. Sector study reports are developed and may be accompanied by databases that inventory sector-specific education and training programs. Reports are shared with the sector partnership participants, industry, key government departments, and stakeholders.

Regional and urban training needs assessments collect information on the training and occupational needs of employers, industry, individuals, and communities. The needs assessment reports are distributed to partners and key stakeholders.

Governments and industry undertake sector-specific research such as the tourism, and oil and gas industries, and conduct research on the training and employment needs of specific client groups. Career and labour market information is also generated through the Career and Employment Information Services system and SaskJobs. HRSDC regularly posts regional information on their Saskatchewan web site. HRSDC's regional labour market and economic reviews, occupational analyses, and outlooks, are extensively drawn upon for regional labour market planning.

There is a variety of other information used to support the needs assessment processes that is produced by Saskatchewan Learning, other provincial and federal departments, SLFDB, newspapers, and industry and business associations. Department-generated information produced includes the Overview of the Saskatchewan Economy and Labour Market, the Saskatchewan Labour Market Trends Report, occupational analysis such as the Nursing Labour Market Analysis Report, and other information accessible from the SaskNetWork, LMI Extranet and the departmental website. Saskatchewan Learning and HRSDC have jointly produced LMI products, such as the Saskatchewan Employment Demand Forecast and Saskatchewan Job Futures. The Saskatchewan Job Futures utilizes the internet as the medium for distributing occupational information to users. The project consists of a summary of occupational information covering 522 categories and detailed occupational profiles on approximately 250 occupations. A group of construction industry stakeholders brought together by the Construction Sector Council have developed an assessment of demand for trades and occupations in the province from 2005-2013.

Labour market information is also used by individuals and employers in making education, career, and employment decisions. SaskNetWork is an internet based self-help tool designed to support individuals and employers, as well as the delivery of career and employment services. The post-secondary institutions also use career and labour market information to support career counselling and career fairs (Planning for the Needs of Saskatchewan Learners, Employers and Communities, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, 2002). [9]

From the foregoing, it can be seen that there is a very large amount of labour market information produced. There are, however, serious problems in co-ordination and in supporting effective use of the data, especially for planning purposes. Understandably, with so much information produced, the information can be confusing and sometimes appear contradictory. We have been told by some employers and others that the labour market planning processes too often have had limited involvement of key training sector partners, although most have expressed interest in becoming involved. Employers are involved in the regional planning partnerships to varying degrees, but too often the extent of involvement is limited to needs identification through consultations. Processes for working with the education and labour market partners to review and assess the capacity and array of programs and services of the training system and its overall effectiveness in meeting current and future demand of learners, employers, and communities, are in need of improvement.

The conclusion that there is a need for strengthened provincial planning processes to forecast occupational and skill requirements, identify emerging training demands, and create potential solutions to meet pressures, is not new. Indeed, this was one of the findings of the 2002 review referenced above. It also concluded that there is a need for clarity of roles and responsibilities for regional labour market planning and overall support to the training system to assist planning, program development, and evaluation. There is also a need for system-wide methodologies and reports on how employment and skills, as well as overall employment conditions, evolve and transform in a constantly changing, knowledge-based economy. Information must be systematically aggregated and analyzed to "turn information into knowledge."

Sectoral and provincial trend analyses and impacts in a form that can be integrated into planning processes are essential. Sound research methodologies and compatible data systems are required to ensure accurate, reliable, and consistent data. More specifically, skills and needs requirements must be determined accurately and reported in a form that can be integrated into planning. This must include the technical, learning, essential, management, and leadership skills and knowledge that the training system must develop. Criteria and processes for the identification, prioritization, and assessment of needs, articulation of the training system's effectiveness in meeting the needs of learners, employers and communities, must be systematically applied.

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[9] *Planning for the Needs of Saskatchewan Learners, Employers and Communities*, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, 2002

There is a need for a manageable system to support the integration of the information with the business plans of the institutions. This is needed not only for planning and program development, but also to assess the delivery of program and service and the overall effectiveness of the training system in meeting the needs of learners, employers, and communities.

The quality of labour market information must be assessed on the basis of accuracy and relevance. It must be accompanied by meaningful analysis in usable and useful forms. It must also have employer and labour as well as local and regional information and support.

The following are some of the key objectives that the labour market information processes must achieve:

- measuring and evaluating labour market needs effectively;
- understanding and assessing the rapidly changing labour market;
- ensuring that the participants in labour market needs assessments are appropriate;
- ensuring that industry and occupational based planning processes are relevant and effective;
- ensuring that timely and necessary information is available to all users;
- ensuring that employers have adequate access to the system;
- ensuring that employers have their needs recognized and accounted for;
- ensuring that the linkages with employment are analyzed and understood;
- ensuring that local and regional labour market needs are adequately considered and that a larger provincial context is provided and considered;
- ensuring that evaluation, planning program development processes recognize industry and employment needs and demands; and,
- ensuring that career services are adequately equipped with information and analysis to serve needs.

The Panel's view is that while there has been a large amount of work done, substantial improvements are needed. There is a need for better participation, coordination, and integration across the system and for processes to use the information effectively. Saskatchewan Learning uses committees and regular assemblies of interested parties to achieve these goals, but these fall short of meeting the needs of today's rapidly changing and ever more pressing demands for a responsive system. The demands that will be placed on the learning system over the coming years make it essential that priorities and resources are devoted to the right things at the right time, based on the right information, by all parties.

In 2002, Saskatchewan Learning made a commitment to develop a system to address many of the objectives set out in the above. The Panel has asked itself whether the responsibility for coordinating and managing labour market information should be shifted from the department to a new agency operating as a strategic partnership. While attractive in some respects as a way of concentrating effort and ensuring broader participation, the Panel is conscious of the fact that the creation of new management agencies runs the danger of more fragmentation. For the time being, the Panel is of the view that Saskatchewan Learning should retain the provincial LMI system responsibility in this area. The Panel does believe, however, that Saskatchewan Learning needs to address any organizational impediments within the department that reduce the effectiveness of the work.

The Panel recommends:

25. **Saskatchewan Learning clarify and simplify roles and responsibilities for labour market planning and overall support to the training system.**

26. **The commitments made by Saskatchewan Learning in 2002 and the identified need to strengthen provincial planning processes to forecast occupational and skill requirements, identify emerging training demands, and create potential solutions to meet pressures, be reinforced as a priority to achieve:**

    - **increased integration and coherency of the labour market planning and information system for the training and post-secondary sector;**

    - **improved quality of labour market information for more informed decision making regarding training; and,**

    - **increased engagement with industry and business, and improved responsiveness to better meet the needs of learners, employers and communities.**

27. **The strategy and action plan be overseen by the proposed Saskatchewan Training System Planning and Coordinating Council, and that consideration be given to developing a strategic partnership under the Council to manage strategic level labour market information activities.**

6.6 Fragmentation and Jurisdiction

We have heard considerable concern expressed about fragmentation of the training system. Fragmentation of the system contributes to decisions and programming that is less effective and efficient than it would be otherwise. Effective planning and coordination is made difficult and system integration often frustrated. As a result costs are higher, many employer needs do not get addressed, students suffer from fewer and lower quality programs, and continuous learning is compromised.

Fragmentation means different things and is attributed to different factors by different people. Some feel that the problem is a multiplicity of institutions. The separation of SIAST, the Regional Colleges, the SATCC, the SCN, Campus Saskatchewan, the DTI, the SIIT, to name the key ones, requires a great deal of coordination and interactive engagement.

One alternative would be to put some or all of these under one overarching governance structure. The Panel is not of the view that a reduction in the number of institutions is the best way to achieve greater integration. The existing architecture has been developed over the years in a quite deliberative way with considerable success. Each of the institutions provides for concentrated effort to address important needs and responsibilities. The Panel does not favour wholesale re-organization and centralization of the management of the existing institutions.

Some of the coordination problems arise due to mandates. Mandates are not always clear and in some cases overlap while in other cases have duplication. This gives rise to a certain amount of conflict and some inefficiencies. There is some confusion, for example, about certain aspects of the mandates of SIAST and the Regional Colleges. In general fragmentation and system breakdown will not be resolved by radical changes in institutional and program structure.

The real solution to the problems that do arise between institutions must be addressed through common commitment to one model and through effective planning and coordination. The model is provided in the form of the New Training Model.

The Panel is also aware of problems of fragmentation arising from jurisdictional divisions. Some of these arise with respect to the division of responsibility between the federal and provincial governments for First Nations' programs. One part of this that has been mentioned on a number of occasions relates to the management and operation of the *Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements* (AHRDA) that are entered into and administered by HRSDC and provincial Aboriginal organizations. These questions will be addressed later in this document.

Other parts of potentially conflicting federal-provincial responsibilities were addressed in the late 1990s with the integration of employment and training programming by a federal-provincial agreement. The *Canada Saskatchewan Labour Market Development Agreement* of 1998 involved the assumption by Saskatchewan of responsibility for the design and delivery of employment benefits and support measures to assist the unemployed in Saskatchewan. A number of provisions under the Agreement were intended to, and have improved the functioning of the training system, either directly or indirectly. These questions will also be addressed later in this document.

One of the more perplexing issues that the Panel has had to address relates to the relationship with the federal government. During the review process, the Panel met with the Federal Council of Senior Officials in Saskatchewan and invited input. The Chair of the Panel also met with senior federal officials in Ottawa at the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister levels, and specifically asked to be informed about federal objectives and plans in the area of training. An invitation was also extended to the officials to work in partnership with the Panel, including providing assistance in understanding and analyzing options.

The reasons for engaging with federal officials are extensive. The federal government has a whole department, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), with many thousands of officials devoted to skills and labour market issues and programs. Spokespersons for the federal government have been making frequent references over the past few years to the importance of skills development and human capital. Canadian taxpayers, through HRSDC, have made a large investment in research and knowledge about skills training, human resources development, investment in human capital, and the functioning of labour markets.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada states that "The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development is responsible for providing all Canadians with the tools they need to thrive and prosper in the workplace and community. We support human capital development, labour market development and are dedicated to establishing a culture of lifelong learning for Canadians. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada works to improve the standard of living and the quality of life of all Canadians by promoting a highly skilled and mobile workforce, as well as an efficient and inclusive labour market." It is, thus, puzzling that the federal government seems in so many ways to be so detached from active work being done to improve the training system, including the work of the Panel.

In part, this may be the result of the fact that since the mid-1990s, the federal government has withdrawn from most active programming in the training and human resources development areas. While continuing to administer large entitlement programs such as Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan, the most notable feature of the last decade has been the withdrawal from active programming that supports human development. Apprenticeship training was, until ten years ago, purchased by the federal government. The $5 million support for this was terminated. A comprehensive program to purchase training courses and to support learners, in place for many years, was ended. The Canada Assistance Plan, which supported a national program of income support and human development, was terminated. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada enforced an arbitrary cap on its financial support for training and other post-secondary education with the result that there is now a national waiting list of approximately 10,000 First Nations students, approximately 2,000 of which are in Saskatchewan (Canadian Association of Colleges, 2005).

One initiative of particular importance for Saskatchewan was the Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Development Agreement, negotiated in 1998. The Agreement provided for the devolving of responsibility for training and other employment services for the unemployed who had previously been served by the Employment Insurance (EI) program.

The federal government has retained responsibility for three areas of skills, employment and career development. These are services to Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and youth. The majority of Aboriginal people are not EI eligible because of the EI definition of unemployment, and a large number are young. Specifically targeted federal funding under Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements

(AHRDAs), go to separate First Nations and Métis organizations, which allocate the funds to programs and services, most of which are delivered either by DTI, SIIT, or Band Councils and Tribal Councils. In Saskatchewan, there are two Agreements, one with Métis Training and Employment of Saskatchewan Inc. (METSI) and the other with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). We have been told that while these Agreements have brought much needed resources and assistance to the province, there are a number of problems associated with them. For Saskatchewan the total dollar amount is almost equal to that provided to the province under the LMDA. Funding comes from general HRSDC funds rather than EI funds, which are raised through a national levy on employment.

It is certainly the case that the AHRDAs have provided welcome support for training, skills development and employment development for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan. DTI and SIIT both rely on the funds for a considerable amount of their programming. The total annual amount provided for in the agreements is $40M, of which $10M goes to METSI and $30M to the FSIN through the Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group Inc. (SITAG).

There are some problems with the Agreements as currently structured. First, there is not nearly enough money under the Agreements to fully address the employment and training needs of First Nations and Métis people. Our report has referred to the fact that the most fundamental direct contributor to low incomes and poverty among First Nations and Métis people is low levels of employment. Another is lower pay for work that is undertaken.

The low levels of employment, poverty, and the prolonged periods of unemployment for those who have had employment, isolate many First Nations and Métis people from programs and services they need. Special measures are needed, and the AHRDAs support these measures. The problem is that there are not enough programs and services distributed around the province. The severity of the situation is made worse by the arbitrary cap on support funds historically provided by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). A way must be found to increase the resources in support of First Nations and Métis people's training and employment support needs.

A second problem with the AHRDAs, at least from the provincial training system's perspective, is that they have contributed to fragmentation in the system. HRSDC has failed to put into place processes to facilitate coordination of the AHRDAs with programming offered by the province under the LMDA. There is no overall system to integrate labour market programming across the province and no mutually agreed upon framework within which to link labour market programming across different groups. Coordination is made more difficult by the number of players involved and to confusion over mandates. Uncertainty about the respective roles and strategies of HRSDC and INAC is a problem. Asymmetry in some of the types of programs offered under the LMDA and the AHRDAs adds a certain amount of confusion.

In the view of the Panel, care needs to be taken in concluding that the AHRDAs must inherently lead to fragmentation. There is a danger that too often this is a view of central administrators that reflects frustration over control as much as it does fragmentation. One of the main themes of this report is that fragmentation can best be addressed by trying to ensure all the parties subscribe to one vision and one model with respect to the system. This is one of the reasons that the Panel places so much emphasis on the New Training Model as a powerful force for integration. In this respect, the Panel has observed that the primary delivery agents under the AHRDA's, including DTI, SIIT, Tribal Councils and Bands, have a high level of understanding of and commitment to the NTM. They express frustration because other factors make their work difficult, including lack of resources, inadequate linkages to employment, and conflict over jurisdiction.

The issue of jurisdiction has been a long-standing issue in Saskatchewan as it pertains to First Nations people, institutions, and reserve lands and communities. For many years, First Nations leaders and organizations have held to the position that the special status and rights of First Nations people are inextricably linked to federal responsibility for First Nations people. This special status and separate responsibility is tied to section 91(24) of the *British North America Act*, which makes Indians and reserves the exclusive legislative responsibility of the Government of Canada, the *Indian Act* under that provision, and the treaties which are nation to nation agreements with the Crown.

All of this is quite clear. Through time, however, the federal government has pursued a policy that is either directly contrary to this understanding or more nuanced in its interpretation, depending upon one's point of view. The federal view is that First Nations people are a shared responsibility and that Métis people are a provincial responsibility excepting for those services provide by the federal government to all people. The view of the federal government has evolved over time, but is essentially that provincial responsibility applies except to matters affecting reserve lands, services and regulation provided for under the *Indian Act* and other federal legislation, special services provided at federal discretion in areas of general federal responsibility, and the treaties.

Over the years, the federal government has generally held to the position that the services it provides apply only to residents of reserve lands. The province has somewhat reluctantly through time accepted that off-reserve residents must be served by provincial services and has entered into agreements to that effect. However, it has been very reluctant to extend this to services provided on-reserve, and to provide operating funding for First Nations institutions that primarily serve reserve residents.

Over time all of this has become problematic in many respects. The challenges in meeting the needs of First Nations people can no longer be neatly divided between on-reserve and off-reserve. Families and communities are interconnected in ways that show little regard for geographical boundaries.

There is a large First Nations population in the urban centers and an equally large population on-reserve. Both are growing, with the latter expected to increase in relative size in coming years. People are highly mobile and communities are becoming ever more inter-connected. The economic success of Métis and First Nations communities, whether rural or urban, can no longer be treated as a separate question from the economic success of the rest of the province. The old solitudes are no longer sustainable. Mutual interdependence has been thrust upon the whole of the population, as this report has emphasized. It is in many ways a new province in terms of relationships and interconnectedness.

The idea of jurisdiction as it applies to federal and provincial governments has become strangely anachronistic. The relevant contemporary issue of jurisdiction has to do with First Nations and Aboriginal governance, and Aboriginal community and institutional control, as ways to succeed where success has been elusive before. The important questions today turn on what the Aboriginal communities can do what they need to do in order that their people may obtain employment, earn decent family supporting incomes and be able to become part of modern Saskatchewan. Today, the need and desire is to mobilize First Nations and Métis people and communities in order that they may become part of the provincial economy and society without foregoing their distinctive cultures and ways of living. This is a matter of urgent provincial interest whatever agenda the federal government may have.

This view has been supported by the vast majority of people who appeared before the Panel and addressed this issue. Employers and training providers virtually all spoke of the frustrations encountered because of views about jurisdiction. The sense that severe barriers have been created has become so pervasive as to cause many leaders active in the system to feel provincial policy inhibits their ability to meet needs and work with opportunities. Many believe that community-based SIAST and regional college programs are limited to provincial policy that discourages participation by reserve residents. Others believe that provincial policy unduly restricts the delivery of programs on reserves. The government encourages partnerships with First Nations and First Nations institutions to achieve improved outcomes and to expand the resources devoted to training. The question of what kinds of partnerships will be supported or required when First Nations participate requires greater clarity. For instance, there is currently conflict over the fact; SIIT is not eligible for operating funds from the provincial government. In the final analysis, these jurisdiction driven considerations do not serve the system well. They, in turn, do not meet the provincial economic interest as it stands today.

In order to meet this interest, the Panel sees two things as needed in the area of training and employment. One is a new relationship with First Nations people. The second is a new relationship with the federal government. The latter pertains to questions which are additional to those dealing with Aboriginal issues. Both of these matters will be addressed in subsequent chapters. Both will be addressed in ways that attempt to move away from the seemingly endless and exhaustive disputes about off-loading and jurisdiction. This is needed in order to achieve the vision and goals set for the training system. It is needed in order to bring clarity and certainty for all of those working so hard to meet the almost impossible demands and expectations being placed on the system.

As well, it is needed to achieve provincial prosperity, which can and must be a shared prosperity.

The Panel recommends:

28. **The Saskatchewan government, actively negotiate a new relationship with the federal government that addresses the continuing issues and conflicts over off-loading and jurisdiction in the training system.**
29. **The Saskatchewan government enter into a new relationship with both First Nations and Métis people in order to ensure the training system provides support and encourages full and equal participation in training and employment of all people, including First Nations and Métis people and their institutions, without barriers or limits based on jurisdiction.**

6.7 A Plan for Increasing Interest in the Trades and Technical Vocations

In 2004, a group of leaders from education and industry got together to look at the possibility of labour shortages in the trade and technology fields. They formed an informal consortium devoted to profiling trades and technology occupations as a "first choice" career option for Saskatchewan youth. Working together, they have suggested some ways to bring about change. It is encouraging that the representation within this group includes people not only from the training institutions, including SIAST, DTI, SIIT, and the Regional Colleges, but also from industry, government, and K-12 schools.

This is an issue that the Panel heard almost in unison from those with an interest in trades and technical training. Knowledge, information and understanding of the occupations and the opportunities they provide is woefully lacking amongst a major part of the Saskatchewan population. Young people seem to have little awareness of the trades as a future career and those that do often find that others around them discount the work and the training as being for those who can not do anything else.

The Panel strongly encourages government, the school system, and the training system to take up this issue. It is clear that technical occupations do not have respect among the vast majority of people considering occupations. This is true in-spite-of-high demand, good working conditions, and relatively high earnings.

Many of those who talked to the Panel feel that the problem rests with the K-12 school system and teachers who have little understanding of trades and technical work and who are virtually all university graduates. Others feel the problems start in our homes and our communities. Still others hold the media and popular culture responsible.

Today there is a wide mix of relative opportunities for both those who are university educated and those who gain technical and trades certification. There is no objective way of judging one as superior to the other.

Things will only change with better public education and better education and information for those considering career choice, particular young people. This will require improved career advice in the schools. It will also require greater effort by industry to make the work and the workplace more appealing to future employees. Communities and community leaders must take an interest in local activities to communicate and educate about careers in technology and the trades. The future of their communities may depend upon it. Training institutions also have to concentrate on reaching out to schools and communities. And government must support the efforts of all of these parties though support for partnerships and collaborative effort. The need to address this problem is not new. Clearly, however, giving the impending skill shortages, concerted efforts are needed.

The Panel recommends:

30. **The training system, develop and implement an initiative to improve the status and understanding of technical and trades occupations in the general population and particularly in rural communities.**

31. **Saskatchewan Learning through implementation of the Career Development Action Plan support schools in their efforts to improve the image and understanding of the trades and other technical occupations as viable options for young people.**

32. **Work experience options for school students be increased to reduce school drop out rates through more direct linkages to employment.**

33. **The training system place a priority on developing and maintaining outreach activities to support young people who are making career choices.**

7

Inclusiveness in the Training System

Chapter 7: Encouraging Inclusiveness in the Training System

A matter of great concern to virtually all people and organizations that have met with the Panel has to do with the extent to which the training system is effectively reaching and serving all parts of the provincial population.

Part of the concern is one of fairness and equity. Training is one of the most important public policy mechanisms for achieving equality of opportunity in our society. Inequality arises for a whole host of reasons, not only that which is expressed through income disparity. But it is clear from the statistics that income inequality is closely related to differences in training and education. Study after study has identified that earnings and incomes increase the greater the amount of education and training a person receives, and that the return on investment in training in terms of increased earnings exceeds by a wide margin the cost of training.

Another is simply a matter of numbers. The training system will, as has been established, have to increase the participation levels of groups who, to date, have not participated on equal terms with the rest of the population.

It has been recognized for a long time that the training system attracts and serves some groups of the population much better than others. These are the same groups that do well in the labour market generally. They tend to be those from middle- and higher-income families and those whose parents are in the professions or trades and have themselves had post-secondary education and training. The groups it has not served well are those for which the proportion of their members taking part in post-secondary training and education is relatively low, including rural people, Métis and First Nations people, people with disabilities, persons with low incomes, and in certain cases, youth and women.

7.1 Aboriginal

Saskatchewan has a robust, rapidly growing economy and a critical shortage of skilled tradespersons. This combination of factors is limiting corporate expansion, economic development, and the attraction of new industry and investment to the Province.

As has already been established, provincial demographic projections point to the need for Aboriginal people to fill anticipated labour shortages as the baby boomers retire in increasing numbers over the coming years and as new jobs are created. It has been repeated many times to us in submissions and conversations that there is no possibility the training system can meet the future needs of the Saskatchewan labour market without a dramatic increase in the participation rates for Métis and First Nations people.
This young Aboriginal population is potentially Saskatchewan's greatest advantage to assist the province to be competitive in world markets in the near future. However, in order to create this advantage in the skilled trades, the Aboriginal labour supply must

receive adequate education and training, as well as have the supports and incentives to establish strong employment linkages.

If significant improvements in the educational attainment and training of Aboriginal people are not realized, underemployment and dependence on social programs could increase the already unacceptable gaps between the Aboriginal population and the non-Aboriginal population in the province.

The above factors challenge the training system to:

- increase the retention and completion rates of all Aboriginal learners;
- improve the outcomes for Aboriginal students;
- increase the number of education and training opportunities for Aboriginal learners;
- improve the ability of the system to recruit Aboriginal students;
- provide more effective bridging between communities, training and work;
- prepare Aboriginal learners to participate in a representative workforce and prepare the workforce for Aboriginal employees; and,
- build effective educational partnerships with the Aboriginal community.

The Panel has already reported on the conditions of First Nations and Métis people. In summary, the following challenges have been identified.

- ***Educational Attainment Differences***

  Youth who do not graduate from high school are at a serious disadvantage in terms of personal and economic life success. Therefore, finding solutions and providing supports for children and youth at risk of dropping out of school and those already disengaged from school is necessary.

  One of the greatest challenges is monitoring student mobility between and within educational systems and intervening when students prematurely cease to attend school. There is considerable mobility of students between First Nations on-reserve and provincial education systems. Children and youth from highly mobile families may change schools several times during the school year. During 2001/02, within one K-8 school in Regina's core area, there was a 150% turnover of students. The Children's Advocate continues to raise concerns with the province's inability to track students and intervene appropriately when they are not in school.

  Full implementation of the new student tracking system, which has the capacity to identify and track student enrolment, movement, and retention from Kindergarten to Grade 12, will provide the data required to monitor attendance and to intervene with those students who are not attending school. When fully operational, this system will include students in the provincial and First Nations education systems, independent schools, open and closed youth custody facilities, youth care facilities and home-schooled children and youth.

Interest in the pursuit of post-secondary education is high among Aboriginal learners. The *2003 High School Leaver Survey* showed that the majority of Aboriginal students (75%) were considering some form of post-secondary education. Saskatchewan's Aboriginal training institutions, including SIIT and GDI/DTI, are proving effective in developing and delivering programming and increasing student retention among Aboriginal students. These institutions provide Saskatchewan with a real advantage in efforts to mobilize Aboriginal people to help meet labour market needs.

Adult Aboriginal women (25-44 years) identified family responsibilities as the top reason for not completing post-secondary studies, while adult men indicated financial reasons. The report also found that off-reserve Aboriginal people were more likely to complete schooling later in life (Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001).

In general, post-secondary education and training programs have made significant progress in attracting greater participation of Aboriginal students. Over the past decade, participation rates at SIAST have risen from 7.7% in 1990 to 18.4% in 2002/03, although the effect of higher enrolments in ABE is not factored into these figures. When combined with the expected population growth, this will result in rapid growth in demand for post-secondary education over the next 15 years. Marked increases have occurred in participation rates relative to the baseline in ABE, apprenticeship, and work-based training programs.

Growth in Aboriginal educational attainment kept pace with non-Aboriginal growth between 1996 and 2001. The Aboriginal population with at least some post-secondary education increased from 35% to 39%, an increase of four percentage points. Over the same time period, the non-Aboriginal population with some post-secondary education or higher increased from 47% to 51%, an increase of four percentage points. Although the increase in educational attainment was similar for both populations, the non-Aboriginal population remains 12% higher than the Aboriginal population.

- ***Labour Market Participation Rates Differences***

The growing Aboriginal population is viewed as an advantage to help the province mitigate a potential shortfall in the future labour supply. Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population (15 years and older) has considerably lower labour market participation and employment rates and a higher unemployment rate than the non-Aboriginal population (Figure 7.1). Average employment income in 2000 for the Aboriginal population was $18,715, which is 29% less than non-Aboriginal earnings of $26,300 (Census Canada). Participation rates for Aboriginal people are highest among urban residents, the next highest among residents living off-reserve, and the lowest being among reserve residents. Increased participation rates could have the effect of altering somewhat the historic supply patterns in the overall labour market, thus partially offsetting the declines from other sources. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

Figure 7.1

Labour Market Activity of Saskatchewan Population, 15 and older, 2001

	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	*Métis*	Registered Indian Living Off-Reserve	Registered Indian Living On-Reserve
Participation Rate	69.3%	54.5%	67.4%	51.3%	43.1%
Employment Rate	66.0%	42.0%	56.9%	37.6%	29.1%
Unemployment Rate	4.8%	23.0%	15.5%	26.7%	32.3%

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

- ***Challenges and Opportunities***

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Systems

Saskatchewan has a major strength not seen anywhere else in Canada - its world-class Aboriginal post-secondary education systems. The First Nations post-secondary education system includes: the First Nations University of Canada, SIIT and The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center. The Métis post-secondary education system includes: The GDI of Native Studies and Applied Research and DTI. These institutions and systems form the Aboriginal post-secondary education system in Saskatchewan and work in partnership with the public post-secondary system. Together they hold the key to the future competitiveness of Saskatchewan.

There is considerable evidence in the research to support the importance of Aboriginal-governed institutions in improving outcomes for Aboriginal people. We have also had that demonstrated to us in submissions made to the Panel.

The training institutions have already been referenced. GTI has a large Aboriginal staff, and has a good record of providing quality training to Métis people. One of its many strengths, is its commitment to the NTM and the delivery of programs in communities using innovative approaches to learning and instruction. SIIT is now the largest First Nations controlled training institution in the country. It offers a remarkable range of quality programs, a number of which are new programs in the Saskatchewan setting. It is now under strong leadership and is going through a renewal process that will even better position it for a leading role in training in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) is an excellent example of a non-training based First Nations institution that has made training and employment cornerstones of business success. The SIGA has developed bridging programs that link community labour pools to training through to jobs. Cohorts of young people are recruited for future employment and training geared to their needs is offered to prepare for employment at SIGA. The employees then move on to active employment, with training continuing as part of career plans geared to the individual. Individuals are encouraged to look to future opportunities beyond SIGA that will better their futures, drawing on the training and experience they have received. SIGA is now the largest employer of Aboriginal people in the province, with close to 1,000 currently employed.

The essential role and contribution of Aboriginal institutions in support of training and economic development has been established both on the basis of research and experience. The most comprehensive data and analysis on this comes from the Harvard Project on Indian Economic Development and the Canadian Institute on Governance. Both of these centers have been working to determine what contributes to success for Aboriginal people in the context of development. The general conclusions are that success is enhanced if decision-making and governance is in the hands of Aboriginal people, if this is organized through effective governing institutions, and if the institutions have Aboriginal legitimacy (the institutions reflect an Aboriginal perspective on the exercise of authority and possess a general cultural coherence).[10]

- ***Jurisdiction***

The question of jurisdiction has long been a matter of debate and conflict. We discussed this matter in a previous chapter. The Panel has been told that jurisdiction is not a good reason for the province to exclude the First Nations system from its funding and policy framework. A complicating factor is the longstanding position of the Saskatchewan government that First Nations' programs on reserves fall within the federal sphere of responsibility. It is widely recognized that First Nations training lacks adequate support, including money, but as the Panel has indicated there has been disagreement about whether this is an exclusive responsibility of the federal government, or a shared responsibility between the federal and provincial governments. A continuing concern is the possibility that if the provincial government adopts a more flexible approach, the federal government will be tempted to further offload costs onto the province.

This continuing debate about responsibility has meant that the training needs of First Nations are not being recognized or met as fully as they should be. A continuation of this situation will mean the need for trained people will go unmet at the expense of both the overall economy and First Nations people. There is a real danger that First Nations people will not be able to fill the unfolding employment opportunities available to them due to lack of preparation through adequate training.

To their credit, representatives of the provincial government have been thinking about the jurisdictional question. For example, the Provincial Minister of First Nations and

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[10] Stephen Cornell, Catherine Curtis and Miriam Jorgenson. The Concept of Governance and its Implications for First Nations. Harvard Project on Indian Economic Development, 2004.

Métis Relations recently commented in the Leader Post, September 28, 2005:

> "We have to ensure programming and services are not put at risk because nobody can determine who is responsible for delivering those services".

- ***Funding***

Directly related to the jurisdictional discussion is the funding for Aboriginal students and Aboriginal institutions. Funding for Aboriginal post-secondary education and training is currently based on a series of project and programmatic models that have not been modernized. From our consultations and discussions, it is clear to us that current funding for the training of Aboriginal people does not match the major demographic shift that is taking place in the province and the corresponding training needs.

Saskatchewan has a world-class system of Aboriginal post-secondary education institutions and models, but they have historically been under funded in both core funds and program funds and have not received a proportionate share of government education dollars. This under funding has hampered the ability of this system to meet the labour force education needs of their communities and of Saskatchewan.

The future for Saskatchewan's economy and workforce will be exceptionally bright if all governments, federal, provincial, and Aboriginal, make Aboriginal labour force development a major policy priority in terms of increased coordination and funding. Too often Aboriginal education has been termed a priority, but funding realities have not matched priorities or needs.

The equal but unique Aboriginal post-secondary education systems have not been accorded the respect, sustainable funding or credence in the training system that they need to be effective in meeting the economic demands of their communities. Many Aboriginal students are ready for post-secondary study, but are turned away because of lack of funding. The areas of core funding, program funding and capacity are key issues that need creative new approaches if Saskatchewan is going to tap the strength of the Aboriginal labour market. In order for the province to prosper and remain competitive in the future, Aboriginal educational initiatives must receive sustainable, adequate, long-term core and program funding and a new level of policy priority that will ensure that the rapidly growing Aboriginal population has the necessary access to skills education and training. Saskatchewan can no longer afford to have institutions turn away qualified Aboriginal candidates due to funding shortfalls.

The policy issue for governments is to work together to create new funding models for the Aboriginal post-secondary education systems that have a one-to-one correspondence with the goals of the governments in terms of labour supply and industrial competitiveness. The grants to the Aboriginal post-secondary institutions must be viewed as economic investments in developing a competitive workforce to sustain Saskatchewan's competitiveness in the Canadian and world economy. It appears that industry in Saskatchewan is ready to work with governments to create the conditions necessary to resolve labour force shortages. Coordination of the Aboriginal institution funding as an investment, not a cost, is a task for a senior policy group from the governments and industry. If we do not address this issue on an immediate priority basis, Saskatchewan will face a serious challenge in skilled trades, a critical shortage of skilled labour, a loss of industry, a loss of economic competitiveness and an Aboriginal population that has not had the opportunity to access post-secondary education. Saskatchewan can not afford to lose the long-term advantage of its Aboriginal workforce through a lack of short-term investment. Many have told us that the issue is under funding of Aboriginal education and that governments have to get serious about funding or the situation will just get worse.

- ***Barriers and Constraints to Increased First Nations and Métis Participation***

Discussions and research indicate that there are increasing Aboriginal education and training successes; however, there is much that still needs to be done. While significant progress has been made, major impediments to the participation and successful completion of learning programs still exist for Aboriginal learners. Challenges at both an institutional and individual level need to be addressed. An assessment of the current state indicates there are a number of critical areas in need of attention if we are to improve access and success of Aboriginal people in post-secondary education, training, and employment. These include:

- ***Institutional Barriers***
    - systemic bias/racism;
    - lack of Aboriginal involvement in the decision-making process;
    - lack of relevant programming;
    - financial limitations;
    - lack of support systems for single mothers, and disabled people;
    - lack of student retention strategies;
    - geographic distance from post-secondary centers;
    - inadequate community facilities to support programs (e.g., childcare);
    - fragmented funding sources for student training allowances;
    - collective agreement/seniority clauses; and,
    - overlapping federal and provincial jurisdictions.

- ***Personal Barriers***
    - limited or no work experience;
    - lack of education (K-12 and post-secondary);
    - lack of funding;
    - lack of role models;
    - cultural variations;
    - varying social problems depending on the client (income, substance abuse, living conditions, etc.);

- lack of support from family members/spouses;
- mismatched skills and job requirements;
- lack of information about jobs; and,
- lack of personal networks.

These barriers are well-known and tend to be a factor to a greater or lesser degree depending upon programs, institutions and location. All institutions need to have comprehensive programs to address these barriers if they are to meet the requirements of the New Training Model.

The Department of Learning has developed a multi-year Post-Secondary Sector Aboriginal Education and Training Action Plan with post-secondary institutions to improve the access and success of Aboriginal people in post-secondary education, training and employment. Progress has been made. For example, since 2000/01, the percentage of Aboriginal people in the apprenticeship program has increased from 6% to 13%, and approximately 18% of SIAST enrollments in 2002/03 were Aboriginal people. Employment for Aboriginal graduates from SIAST rose from 81% in 2000 to 86% in 2002.

There are considerable differences in the circumstances of Aboriginal people based on geographic location. About one-half of First Nations people live in reserve communities, which are largely rural, and about half live off-reserve in cities. A higher proportion of Métis people live in larger urban than in rural communities. Compared to the overall urban population, urban Aboriginal people are more likely to be in single parent families, have lower incomes, have health challenges, have inadequate housing, and are more likely to experience domestic violence. These challenges are particularly acute in the cities of Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert, where Aboriginal populations have grown rapidly.

Labour market results differ for Métis and First Nations people. In 2005, the employment rate for Métis was 63.7%, compared with 50.1% for off-reserve First Nations people. The unemployment rate was 10.5% for Métis, and 17.7% for First Nations people. Employment rates rise with higher levels of educational attainment: 80.0% of off-reserve Aboriginal people with completed post-secondary education were employed in Saskatchewan, compared to 53.7% of those with some post-secondary education or less. This illustrates the remarkable impact of training and education.

Under the NTM, each of the institutions and all of the programs must be designed to address barriers to higher Aboriginal participation. Much has been done over the past few years, but much more is needed. The system must perform even better if the targets and expectations set out in this report are to be met.

Retention of Aboriginal students within the K-12 system is critical to future successes in post-secondary training and employment. There is a critical shortage of Aboriginal teachers at the high school level who are qualified to teach mathematics and sciences.

New strategies must provide for support systems which recognize, strengthen, and incorporate Aboriginal culture and traditions in the delivery of training programs. The unique history, culture, values and traditions of Aboriginal peoples and their learning needs must be reflected in strategies which allow the adult learner to incorporate individual experience into the process of learning. Strategies must also provide for community-based development and delivery systems which enable the training system to respond to Aboriginal people as distinct societies capable of identifying their unique learning needs. . At the same time, emphasis must be given to training programs where labour market opportunities exist in order to increase autonomy and self-reliance within Aboriginal communities.

Both the Aboriginal and Saskatchewan post-secondary educations systems and their governments will have to work together in a partnership to address the need to prepare the Aboriginal workforce and ensure a competitive labour supply advantage. The post-secondary education systems can get the workforce ready, but there is an equal need for Saskatchewan industries to get the workplaces ready. We have heard that achievements are already underway with government programs and industry to ensure ready and welcoming workplaces for Aboriginal graduates through the provincial Aboriginal Employment Development Program (AEDP). Aboriginal education and training was at the top of almost every presentation's agenda, and it must also be at the top of Saskatchewan Learning's agenda.

Saskatchewan has many models available to it in helping to address labour supply issues. Organizations such as the SIGA, the Crown Investments Corporation, the Aboriginal post-secondary education systems, and AEDP are just four examples from dozens of Aboriginal education and training models that exist in Saskatchewan and are having success in attracting and retaining Aboriginal people. These models offer opportunities for Aboriginal people to work and learn in an atmosphere of Aboriginal cultural affirmation, and they need ongoing sustainable funding and support from governments and industry. These models also offer other Saskatchewan industries and organizations opportunities to partner and benefit in a variety of ways from the work already done.

From our discussions with Aboriginal post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan, the following list outlines issues raised:

- more involvement in apprenticeship;
- respect and recognition as full partners within the provincial training systems;
- more programming close to home;
- sustainable core and program funding;
- attention to system capacity needs;
- more adult basic education especially in the areas of mathematics and science;
- better trade and skill information given to students at an early age in the K-12 system;
- greater opportunity to offer the training needed by members of their communities who are now often not able to participate due to funding caps;

- long waitlists;
- the Aboriginal labour supply in Saskatchewan needs to be connected to labour demands in a way that creates a seamless connection and transition from education and training to jobs; additionally, there is a critical need to develop good projects that can connect the companies that have the needs and jobs to the Aboriginal organizations that have the labour supply;
- opportunity to offer the full ranges of training; and,
- increased opportunities to partner with all Saskatchewan post-secondary training institutions.

Aboriginal people need access to quality and culturally appropriate education, training and assistance in making the transition from education and training to the labour market opportunities that exist in Saskatchewan. Improving access and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary education students are issues for the entire post-secondary training system in Saskatchewan. The mainstream post-secondary education system must find ways to increase the numbers of Aboriginal students that are enrolled in programs other than ABE.

Saskatchewan is a "have" province in that it has a major supply of Aboriginal labour. Many Aboriginal participants have expressed concerns about too much emphasis on immigration when there is a pool of untapped young Aboriginal learners ready and waiting to be educated and trained. They want to see initiatives to invest in and use Saskatchewan training institutions to educate their people for the available jobs. With adequate access to quality and culturally appropriate education, it will be possible to meet future labour needs.

Time is of the essence in the current skill shortage situation. Policymakers need to take a long-term view and invest in the development of the Aboriginal workforce. It takes several years to educate and train graduates at the post-secondary education levels. Funding and investments must be long-term in nature, based on sustainable core and program funding and targeted at the needs of both Saskatchewan people and work places. Saskatchewan should be ready to take full advantage of the competitive strength its Aboriginal labour force can offer if it receives appropriate education and training.

Saskatchewan's ability to compete in future world markets will be enhanced or severely compromised by the decisions or lack of decisions taken now concerning education and training for Saskatchewan Aboriginal people who will make up the largest group of new entrants to the labour force for the foreseeable future.

Aboriginal labour force education, development and deployment will require the full policy force of federal, provincial and Aboriginal governments all working together to ensure Saskatchewan's future. Within the provincial government, this is not just the job of the Department of Learning. The province must mobilize all departments at a senior level to ensure that they all work together seamlessly to implement Aboriginal workforce education and training strategies. The solutions will require major, broad and creative approaches from a variety of departments, and the approaches must be comprehensive in terms of bold policies and funding and not the present Band-Aid methods.

Saskatchewan Learning must position itself to play a major leadership role in bringing together governments, industries, organizations and post-secondary institutions to find creative new educational solutions to the critical labour supply shortages. Their approach must ensure that the Saskatchewan Aboriginal post-secondary education systems and the Saskatchewan post-secondary education system have the financial human and capacity resources to meet labour force needs and, especially, the critical trades shortages. The competitive future of Saskatchewan is at stake and Saskatchewan Learning must take the lead at a policy level. This report, because of its extensive Saskatchewan grassroots consultations, offers Saskatchewan Learning an unprecedented opportunity to inform its policy-making process based on many of the suggestions put forward in the numerous briefs to the panel. Aboriginal education and training was at the top of almost every presentation's agenda and it must also be at the top of the provincial government's agenda.

Research shows that student supports are critical to successful retention and persistence of Aboriginal students in training programs. Special attention needs to be given to childcare, housing, transportation, counselling, and training allowances. Since student supports are so critical to Aboriginal student persistence in training, Saskatchewan Learning must take a leadership role to make sure these issues receive system-wide coordination and adequate support.

The Panel would like to see every institution and every program undertake self-audits with respect to breaking down the barriers to First Nations and Métis participation. The audits would review participation levels relative to targets based on equal participation, the relevance of the barriers referred to the program or institution, the presence of measures to breakdown barriers, the opportunity for improving the effectiveness of such barriers, and steps to be taken to realize higher participation and success levels.

The Panel believes that Saskatchewan is truly at a crossroads with respect to the participation of First Nations and Métis people in the provincial economy.

The Panel recommends:

34. The federal and provincial governments ensure sustainable, adequate, long-term federal and provincial funding is available for Aboriginal educational initiatives and a new level of policy priority ensure the rapidly growing Aboriginal population has the necessary access to skills education.

35. A greater number of First Nations and Métis people be provided ABE, literacy, and essential skills programming.

36. SIAST and the Regional Colleges be mandated to provide on-reserve programming in partnerships with First Nations and Tribal Councils.

37. A Partnership Agreement between SIAST and SIIT be developed to share resources, expertise and effort.

38. SIIT receive a share of provincial operating funds for training to support it in mobilizing First Nations youth and adults for the provincial workforce.

39. Funding for SIIT be on the basis of an agreement with Saskatchewan Learning with respect to programs and services offered and expected outcomes of the agreed-upon programs and services.

40. Aboriginal student supports, including childcare, transportation, and housing and career services, be increased with particular emphasis on rural and northern requirements.

41. All training institutions and the SATCC undertake self-audits with respect to breaking down the barriers to First Nations and Métis participation.

7.2 Youth

The biggest source of a new supply of labour is the transition of young people from the years of schooling to the years of work. The school system can be seen as a kind of reservoir of people getting prepared for independent life, which includes getting ready to enter the workforce. The changing demographics of the province since the workforce bubble of the post-war baby boom generation have been considerable. The 1970s and early 1980s were periods of high inflow of new young people into the workforce. These numbers then declined with the rapid decline in birth rates from the mid-1960s onwards, only to increase again in the 1990s and into the early years of the new millennium because of the echo affect of the children of the large baby boom population completing school and entering the workforce. The bubble is now virtually finished, with the result that there will now be a new lower plateau of new entrants to the population.

We have been told that a large number of Saskatchewan school- or college-leavers go to other provinces to study or work and do not return, although we have not been able to obtain exact figures. This reduces the potential supply that could come from those who come of age in the province. We have also been warned that this proportion can be expected to increase in the coming years as outside post-secondary institutions offer more and better programs, become more competitive generally, and as the economies of neighbouring provinces continue to boom, particularly in Alberta.

Most youth will benefit simply through an expansion of training as proposed by the Panel. One group of youth of particular concern who may not benefit so readily are those who leave school early with a low level of educational attainment and low literacy and essential skills. Literacy and essential skills programming is essential to bridge them through to employment and further training. However, the problem is that they tend to access programs of this sort to a very limited degree.

It appears to the Panel that the most likely place to reach such youth is through employers or through community-based organizations. Workplace essentials skills training can be effective for those who are employed. JobStart/Future Skills programs can be effective with this group. That is one of the reasons the Panel favours expanding this program along with other training programs. In the case of youth who do not search for jobs or do not find jobs, other means must be found. In these cases, community-based jobs and training outreach initiatives should be formed to help these youth build bridges to employers and training.

The Panel recommends:

42. **An expansion in Job Start/Future Skills partnerships with employers that focus on young people who leave school early and lack literacy and essential workplace skills.**

43. **That local community initiatives that help unemployed youth bridge to training and employment be supported.**

7.3 Gender

There have been considerable gains over the past few years in the participation of women in training. Post-secondary institutions are doing a better job at supporting women.

Women are still not participating on an equal basis with men, however. One of the dimensions of this is the lower rate of participation in employment. Another is the exceedingly low participation in trades training.

Two of the factors that contribute to increased participation by women are flexibility and decentralization in training. Women more often have family obligations, are generally more attached to the community where they live and work, find continuous learning approaches better suit their needs and are more often mature adults. Another is the availability of childcare. In general, all aspects of the NTM support the participation of women.

The Panel recommends:

44. **The training system institute measures which support women in training programs through initiatives including flexible programming and accessible childcare.**

45. **Career services maintain a focus on higher rates of participation by women in training.**

7.4 People with Disabilities

Adults with disabilities have access to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Labour Market Development Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (EAPD), which provides grants to cover the disability-related costs of attendance in programs which increase their employability skills. As well, the Department of Community Resources and Employment's (DCRE) - Employment Supports for People with Disabilities, which began in 2002, provides for worksite accommodations, job redesign, productivity supports, job maintenance support, job coaching and work assessments.

The program objectives are to provide people with disabilities the skills necessary to be included fully in the labour force, to remove barriers people with disabilities face in preparing for, obtaining and retaining employment, and to provide support to employers to include people with disabilities in their particular workforce.

Individuals receive funding support for the disability-related costs of their participation in training and employment programs or to pay for an assessment to determine the existence and/or extent of a disability. Examples of disability-related supports include technical aids, tutoring, attendant care, note-taking, interpreting, specialized transportation and so on. When required, income support is provided through Student Loans, Provincial Training Allowance, Employment Insurance or the Skills Training Benefit.

The program is cost-shared with the federal government under the two-year (2004/06) Federal/Provincial/Territorial Labour Market Agreement. The federal dollars assigned to the province for the Labour Market Agreement are $10,852,608.50 for the 2004/05 and 2005/06 fiscal years. The Department of Learning's portion of the federal funding for each of these fiscal years is $ 5.2 million.

The Panel was told that in many cases, the funding provided to people with disabilities was not enough to cover the real costs of training and associated expenses. For example, we heard from one presenter (who is unable to take notes in class on their own due to their disability) that the cost to employ a note-taker was not offered because the program had run out of money for the fiscal year. This became a real hardship as the student had to rely on other class members to supply their notes, and this did not happen on a regular basis. Another participant told us how they needed special computer equipment and software in order for them to participate fully in the training, but they did not qualify to be funded under the EAPD program.

The Panel recommends:

46. The level of training supports provided to people with disabilities be reviewed and amounts adjusted to cover the real costs of training supports.

7.5 People on Assistance and the Long-term Unemployed

One of the problems that the Panel has identified has to do with serving the needs of poor and disadvantaged people who are not eligible for Employment Insurance assistance. Some of these are the long-term unemployed and those who have never entered the labour market because of barriers and challenges they could not overcome. Many are young and include single mothers. Quite a number are on social assistance. The initial responsibility for this group of high needs people rests with DCRE. Training is obviously an important element in the transition from unemployment and welfare to work. However, there are problems ensuring that the training needs of this group are met.

The Panel understands that considerable work has been done to support the transition to work and to retain the working poor in the workforce. The program framework being implemented by DCRE appears to be a good one. However, it is important that the system never lose sight of this group of disenfranchised people. In this case, the issues arise partly as a result of fragmentation within the provincial government itself. Most importantly, there is a need to ensure that the training system is responsive to the needs of these people. SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and the SATCC have a special obligation. The training system must recognize its critical role in meeting the needs of the long-term unemployed, the working poor, and those with little or no previous attachment to the labour force. Particular attention must be paid to the need for essential skills and literacy for this group where learners are missing these skills and competencies. Included in this group are many young people, including those that leave school early and those who were not able to achieve learning success in school.

There can be no doubt that this is a provincial responsibility and that the training system has a role and a duty. The Regional Colleges in the North and in rural areas, and SIAST in the major urban centers, are especially important. The array of programs and services that they are mandated to provide is adequate to meet the requirements of this group. However, close coordination with DCRE offices and staff is essential, and careful attention to the needs of this part of the population is critical. The NTM embraces the needs of this group of people and, in many ways, the success of its adoption can be judged on the basis of whether it meets these needs. To some degree this group can be seen as the "canaries in the mine shaft" when assessing how the system is functioning. Losing people to this group is a sign that the system is not working well.

In its submission, SIAST expressed concern about the dual mandate it has to serve both social and economic needs. The Panel interpreted this comment in part as a reference to its responsibility to this clientele. The Panel rejects the suggestion that there is a problem with a dual mandate. There is no other institution that can meet this need in the cities. This is not a matter that SIAST can leave to the Regional Colleges in the four major centers. SIAST performs the functions of the colleges in the cities. The Panel considers it important that SIAST fully accept its responsibilities in this regard. The New Training Model makes no distinction on the basis of learners. It proceeds from the assumption that all kinds of training needed to prepare for employment is of value and needs to be provided and recognized.

- *Income Support*

Saskatchewan has always been committed to the goal that people should be able to acquire the fundamental skills they need to participate fully in the workforce no matter what their financial situation. Therefore, government makes loans and grants available that provide financial support to individuals who need it and has services in place to assist people as they make decisions on preparing for employment.

Student loans are available for most university and technical/vocational programs and, generally, this is the only income support option available to students participating in these education/training programs. But loans present their own set of problems. For example, being in default of student a loan repayment is a barrier to further training for a number of low income individuals. A number of individuals have been encouraged to enter training programs before being fully prepared academically, as well as not having addressed some of their other issues such as addictions, childcare and transportation, etc. This has caused many to drop out resulting in an inability to obtain employment, thereby drastically impacting on their ability to repay the loans. As well, individuals in low-paying occupations also experience difficulties in repaying student loans that may affect their ability to progress to further education. Government does provide additional support measures for individuals who are experiencing difficulties in repayment; however, this may need to be reviewed to improve access for low-income people.

Grants in the form of PTA, Apprenticeship Training Allowances, Transitional Employment Allowances, or the Skills Training Benefits may be available for qualifying individuals.

Saskatchewan has developed an income support plan for the province based on the concepts of "citizenship" and "inclusion". The plan (*Building Independence*) ensures that every citizen of the province has the right and responsibility to be included as an equal and integral part of the community and to enjoy the social and economic benefits that come with living in Saskatchewan.

The *Building Independence* philosophy is to attach more people to the labour market than to welfare. Individuals applying for social assistance are first guided through a process to develop a plan for the future and to help them determine if they are ready for a job, need training or are in need of more long-term financial support.

The plan addresses the barriers that prevent the client from inclusion and gives direction for future activities leading to employment. It also identifies which type of income support is available.

Other *Building Independence* programs include Family Health Benefits, which provide health benefits to low-income working families with children, the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, which provides assistance to working parents and those who receive child or spousal support, and the Saskatchewan Child Benefit.

A person with a work history (EI eligible) may receive the Skills Training Benefit while in training. The responsibilities for this group of high-needs people rests largely with the DCRE. Training is obviously an important element in the transition from unemployment and welfare to work. However, we have been told that these training needs are largely unaccounted for and that the training system does a poor job taking these needs into account. Part of the problem appears to be the fragmentation of responsibility and the fact the DCRE is very peripheral to the training system in terms of meeting the needs of this client group.

Employment programs offered by DCRE were discussed in our consultations with their department. These included the Bridging, Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities, Support Program for Youth, Supported Transitions Initiative, Targeted Wage Subsides, Self Employment, Career and Employment Services Contracts, and Jobs First.

We have heard from participants in our consultations that the employment and training programs currently available to assist individuals are not serving the chronically under- and unemployed very well. One of the problems relates to the restriction of assistance under the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) to those who are EI beneficiaries. There are many unemployed persons who are not eligible for EI assistance, who experience some of the most difficult barriers to employment, and who are not as well served. It is not clear that these people are generally well represented and served within the training system.

Programs, which include low-income earners, offered by the Department of Learning also were discussed. An example is the JobStart/Future Skills program which links training to employment. This program, offered in partnership with Saskatchewan businesses, industry associations, individuals, public training institutions and other training deliverers, provides recognized training and employment opportunities for unemployed Saskatchewan people.

The program options under JobStart/Future Skills include Institutional Quick Response Training, Sector Partnerships and Work-based Training for the Employed and Work-based Training for the Unemployed.

- *Institutional Quick Response Training - Quick Skills (QS) and Saskatchewan Skills Extension Program (SSEP)*

This option provides funds to public training institutions to train the unemployed to meet industry requirements for skilled workers. The program also provides access to credit training to residents in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

The training, delivered by SIAST campuses, Regional Colleges, and the DTI, can be short-term (normally a 20 week maximum) to respond to the immediate needs of the labour market, as well as a one year certificate or a two-year diploma program.

Tuition fees for courses funded through the Quick Skills training option are waived for social assistance recipients and individuals qualifying for PTA in courses of less than 12 weeks.

Income support is available through PTA or student loans, depending on the length of the courses.

- *Work-based Training for the Employed*

This program provides funding support to Saskatchewan employers in the manufacturing, processing and agri-value sectors who need to retrain existing permanent employees in order to maintain or increase their competitive position. The program funds a portion of eligible training costs, which include: external instructor costs; in-house instructor costs where in-house instructors are critical to the success of the training; employee wages where employees are removed from production to undertake training; training materials, including multimedia, used exclusively for training; facility and equipment rental; tuition; travel and accommodation for off-site training of staff or instructors (train the trainer).

The program will also provide retraining support to employers to retrain or upgrade the skills of employees facing permanent layoff or employees moving from part-time to permanent full-time employment. This option is not restricted to specific sectors and is open to all Saskatchewan employers.

- *Work-based Training for the Unemployed*

This program provides financial assistance to employers to deliver recognized on-the-job training that leads to permanent employment for unemployed Saskatchewan residents.

Employers are expected to provide recognized on-the-job training for new, full-time positions in the workplace. The program provides up to 50% of approved training costs for each trainee. Eligible training costs include wages, training materials and supplies, instruction and other delivery costs. Training must be recognized by industry or a public training institution or government.

- *The Sector Partnerships Program*

The Sector Partnerships Program assists industry and community stakeholders to develop strategic plans that address their current and future training and human resource needs. The program provides industry with the means to identify the growth areas and the training needed in both technical and non-technical areas in order for the industry to have the skilled workforce required for expansion and competition in the global markets.

The program is an industry-driven initiative that encourages partnerships between business, labour, Aboriginal partners, community organizations, and training providers such as SIAST, Regional Colleges and universities.

Funding is provided to the sector for activities such as: identifying industry sector skill needs, human resource planning, developing occupational standards, planning workplace adjustment, and developing training solutions.

- *Adult Basic Education*

Adult Basic Education (ABE) provides a wide range of credit and noncredit programs and other organized learning for adults who have not completed their secondary-level education. Successful completion of credit programs results in a certificate of secondary-level standing which is critical for gaining entrance to further training (technical or trade schools, apprenticeship training, or university) or to employment (for job entry, retraining or advancing in a job, or for continuing employment).

ABE programs help adults to acquire and develop literacy and numeracy skills; to acquire the necessary academic prerequisites to access further post-secondary education and skill training opportunities or employment and workplace training opportunities; to increase educational levels for purposes of self-improvement; to learn and develop living, social and employment skills; and to acquire and develop language skills for purposes of living in Saskatchewan. Qualifying individuals in ABE programs delivered by provincial post-secondary institutions receive the PTA.

It is clear from the statistics that income inequality is closely related to differences in training and education. Study after study has identified that earnings and incomes increase the greater the amount of education and training a person receives, and that the return on investment in training in terms of increased earnings exceeds by a wide margin the cost of training.

Saskatchewan Learning supports the training needs of adults by providing public training institutions and others with funding to deliver programs and services, as well as by either providing or ensuring that individuals in need get access to the loans and/or grants needed to attend programs. Since programs and supports that endeavour to meet the needs of EI and Social Assistance clients are the main vehicles used to assist low-income people through the training system, there is a risk that those who are not on these programs and who are low-income working people and have limited attachment to the workforce are not receiving adequate training support.

The Panel recommends:

47. **The Department of Community Resources and Employment be provided a full seat at the table in all of the training system planning and coordination activities.**

48. **The training system recognize its critical role in meeting the needs of the long-term unemployed, the working poor, and those with little or no previous attachment to the labour force, and that:**

    - **particular attention be paid to the need for essential skills and literacy for this group (where learners are missing these skills and competencies);**

    - **the Department of Learning consider a potential role for community-based organizations in program delivery for the long-term unemployed, the working poor and those with little or no previous attachment to the labour force; and**

    - **the degree to which the needs of the above populations are being met by the training system be reviewed and program modification be implemented based on the results.**

7.6 The Role of the Schools

As mentioned earlier in the report, changes in the economy and labour market have been driving the need for change in the fields of lifelong learning and career development. The concept of career has changed from one of a steady, reliable path of upward movement to one that involves career moves that are often lateral and characterized by a succession of job switches in different industries and occupations, requiring higher levels of education, a broader array of skills and adaptability to change. A shift in focus is occurring from the traditional preparation of individuals for a single job or career to enabling individuals to anticipate, recognize, adapt and manage work and life transitions in the context of lifelong learning.

The Department of Learning is currently developing a three-year Career Development Action Plan in partnership and collaboration with the learning sector and key stakeholders to support the success and transitions of learners, particularly youth, into post-secondary education and the labour market. The scope of this Action Plan is the career development programs, services and supports that are delivered across the province within the K-12, post-secondary, and public library systems governed by provincial legislation. As career development is central to lifelong learning, this Action Plan should help to raise awareness of the importance and value of career development to individuals, employers, and communities and signal the need to connect to other relevant strategies, programs and initiatives that are being developed in the context of lifelong learning.

One of the concerns that we heard repeatedly is about the nature and quality of guidance advice and information that high school students receive about careers. There is real concern that the high school system continues to be heavily oriented to academic education and professional careers when providing career advice and information. Many have said that they do not consider this to be deliberate. Rather, it is a reflection of the fact that most teachers are inclined, based on their own experience, to see university education as the superior form of preparation for life and work. The result is that students are left with a sense that trades and technical education is a less desirable option suited only to the less successful students at the high school level. The overall result is to discount the occupations for which technical and trades training prepares students.

It has also been said that the formal career advice and counselling in the school systems is very uneven across schools and in terms of different occupations. It is widely believed that the knowledge, information and advice with respect to career choice is generally inadequate with respect to vocations beyond the common professional ones. We have heard this complaint not only in terms of the trades, but also more broadly about occupations such as agriculture, mining, oil and gas, construction, and a host of others. One of the most common issues that needs attention is the provision of balanced information and advice to students regarding occupational options and choices. There is a widespread concern about the balance, fairness and comprehensiveness of what is now provided to students generally.

A number of people have argued that high school can be used more effectively as time to acquire on-the-job knowledge and training, as well as work experience. Those who support this suggest that such work-based training and experience can not only provide some of the initial credentials for trades and technical occupations, but also early preparation regarding some of the essential work skills required to be successful in today's workplace. In particular, those students not likely to pursue further university-based academic education can gain an early advantage in their progression to employment. Many schools have now initiated work experience programs for high school students, and the Department of Learning is supportive of these undertakings. However, there are a considerable number of continuing barriers, including teacher resistance, school liability and the prohibitive cost of insurance, and insufficient employer co-operation.

A further concern we have heard about high schools is that literacy skills are lacking and science and mathematics knowledge is inadequate. While it is conceded that there are many very good high schools in terms of mathematics and sciences, the concern is expressed that there are still far too that do not have adequate programs in these two major areas. Of particular concern, are many rural schools and First Nations' schools located on reserves. It has been pointed out to us that in the case of many of these schools, a lack of teachers and the narrowness of program offerings mean that mathematics and sciences are often not fully offered, or offered in a diluted form. The result is that students are not prepared for many training programs. Indeed most technical and vocational programs are now quite demanding in terms of both mathematics and scientific knowledge, and gaps in these areas seriously undermine the ability of students to undertake training that is essential to becoming part of the modern workforce.

Not everyone is of the opinion that the problems presented rest with the schools. Some have suggested that the training system and employers must assume more responsibility to deal with those who have not had successful schooling. Schools, some say, cannot be all things to all people. They can only do so much. A systems approach requires that the bigger picture be understood, and that needs be met and gaps filled at a time and place that works best. This may not always be within the schools and during primary school attendance years.

The Panel recommends:

49. **The delivery of career and counselling services in the schools be improved to ensure that students are aware of and have actual experience with work.**

50. **The schools and the Regional Colleges make an immediate commitment to partnerships to provide career services to school-age young people and to encourage more informed career choices.**

51. **The importance of high school mathematics and sciences be emphasized with the schools and counselors.**

52. **The information and counselling that is provided emphasize the opportunities and benefits of pursuing technical training and work.**

53. **Work experience programs in the schools be encouraged based on initiatives now beginning in a number of schools.**

7.7 Innovation and Increased Participation Levels

There are other factors that require special attention in support of inclusiveness and increased participation. They are all fundamental to the NTM.

- *Encouragement of Lifelong Learning*

  Lifelong learning has important implications for how educational and training systems are structured – they are becoming more open, more flexible and closely linked. There is now an increasing range of pathways into learning and training. A mix-and-match of options offer possibilities of full-time and part-time learning delivered on-site or at a distance, and these can be separate from or combined with work commitments at different times and via instructional methods most suitable for learners. Lifelong engagement in education and training, as well as lifelong careers (rather than lifelong jobs), requires guidance services that citizens will be able to access through life to be drawn upon when required depending on the information and advice needs of the user and the opportunities in the employment and training market. To truly facilitate lifelong career development, the sites of delivery need to be located all across the education and training systems and linked together in a seamless service delivery system, ensuring that learners get the lifelong career development supports they need.

- *Learner-centered training*

  Learner-centered training places the student at the center of the training. It begins with understanding the educational contexts from which a student comes. It continues with the instructor evaluating the student's progress towards learning objectives. By helping the student acquire the basic skills to learn, it ultimately provides a basis for learning throughout life. Therefore it places the responsibility for learning on the student while the instructor assumes responsibility for facilitating the student's education. This approach strives to be individualistic, flexible, competency-based, varied in methodology and not always constrained by time or place.

- *Recognition of Prior Learning*

  Recognition of Prior Learning is addressed in another section of our report dealing with systems issues. However, it must be noted here that it is one of the features of the NTM that can contribute greatly to inclusiveness and increases participation. Perhaps nothing illustrates better the divergence between those who use the services of the system and those who manage it than the issue of Recognition of Prior Learning. From documentation we have reviewed, there is a formal commitment within the system that learning activities in the public system should be well-integrated. We have been told by students and employers that the system they envision is one where virtually all training and post-secondary learning is part of a continuum within which any relevant training taken will be recognized and count toward further advancement. There is a widespread belief that training and post-secondary education is, in fact, a lifelong endeavour and that this endeavour is not and should not be made up of discontinuous parts.

This idea is fundamental to the thinking of virtually all users of the system. It is also in some sense part of the underlying theory of what builds a strong training system as evidenced by things that have been said to us by professionals in the fields of adult education and lifelong learning. It is also consistent with the vision that we talked about earlier for a modern Saskatchewan training system. Whatever else may be found within a vision of a modern training system, it seems clear from what we have heard that the vision must encompass recognizing and rewarding learning at each step along a continuous path.

The reality, however, appears to be much different. While there are efforts being made to improve the degree to which prior learning is recognized, recognition still seems to be the exception rather than the rule. This is not to say that there have not been efforts to bring about change.

We have been told that this problem extends from entry level-training and education to the more advanced levels of skills development. Thus, questions have been raised about the value and wisdom of devoting so much time and resources to high school equivalency programs like ABE when the actual skills and abilities that need to be addressed might be better provided through alternative programs that focus on priority workplace skills and competencies. In order for this to work, it would require, at least in part, a shift away from the lockstep credential-based system for determining readiness for further education and training and for work itself and a move toward a truly comprehensive system of Recognition of Prior Learning. This situation illustrates the degree to which prior learning and credentialism can become intertwined. While credentials are used most often to determine readiness for certification and for work, they often have the affect of embedding requirements that are counter to effective recognition of prior learning.

No one has advocated that credentials in the form of degrees, certificates, diplomas, and journeyperson status be eliminated from the system. Many have argued that there is a need to examine aspects of the credentialing process. They question whether, at the pre-employment level of training, the adherence to traditional credentials interferes with an effective flow of training and recognition prior learning. It is also argued that specific credentials for many kinds of jobs should be replaced by a requirement for skills and aptitudes which match the jobs. Of course, in cases where health, safety and specialized knowledge and competencies are required, credentials will never be displaced since the credentials define the knowledge and competencies required. This, however, is not the case for many types of work, and a real question arises as to whether credentials need to be so widely and rigidly used to determine acceptability or suitability for jobs.

We have been told steps need to be taken to achieve a greater use of the processes for recognizing prior learning. As well we were told there must be a greater degree of centralized direction over the processes to ensure recognition of prior learning is implemented expeditiously. While progress is being made in terms of credit transfers, the process lacks urgency and is progressing slowly.

- *Technology and E-learning*

As might be expected, there has been considerable discussion about the possible expanded use of technology to deliver training programs in the province. While the use of new and evolving technologies covers a wide range of possible things, two main types of approaches have been referred to in presentations to us:

- Computer-based, internet-delivered courses.
- Two-way interactive video broadcast delivered via satellite.

The advantages to the use of these technologies have been hotly debated in discussions with us, with advocates strongly supporting increased dependence on them, and many others having a more skeptical view. The advantages that have been argued are that technology can help address many of the barriers that are inherent in traditional training models and, in so-doing, contribute to greater inclusiveness.

A number of people have expressed frustration that computer-based internet courses have not been given a greater priority within the training system. They argue that there is resistance from the managers and traditional program instructors and that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of the potential for such approaches. They argue that along with this resistance there has been an unwillingness to provide the financial and human resources needed to develop and support courses offered using this approach.

By way of contrast, we have been told that two-way televised broadcast instruction has become a significant vehicle for the delivery of education and training in the province.

It has been suggested to us that, in order to increase understanding of the potential and the effectiveness of e-learning, a study be undertaken jointly by the department and the institutions in the training system to provide a comparative assessment of different learner models and analysis of learner benefits.

- *Career development and guidance services*

In general, Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions provide services to help students select a career and find a job. Basic services at all institutions include career counselling, direction in setting career goals, assessment services (i.e., personality, interests, hard and soft skills and abilities) and career development planning. Issues often addressed in career counselling include future goals and skills identification and the matching of occupations with individual personalities, interests and values. Attention is also paid to researching occupational options, learning options and trends in the work world. Services are delivered in a format of individual and/or group guidance, information provision, or employer liaison and placement.

Approaches to ease students' transitions into and out of post-secondary education vary from institution to institution. Some provide work experience opportunities through internships, practicums, or the cooperative education program; others do little to facilitate workplace connections for their students. SIAST and the Regional Colleges make connections with employers for on-the-job training or even, in the case of SIAST, take a more active role by acting as brokers between students and employers to facilitate employment for graduates. Most institutions post employment opportunities, provide students with information about potential employers, and assist students with improving their self-marketing skills for finding employment. All provide training and employment opportunities for Saskatchewan people and skilled workers for employers who need to fill new positions.

Other services are offered as a part of training and employment programs that are designed to meet the needs of special needs groups. Programs such as Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities and Adult Basic Education or Bridging to Employment have career development as a component of their overall service. There is considerable variation between these programs with respect to the degree and type of career development services that are provided. In the training sector, the structure and organization of career service delivery varies between institutions. Students have access to a number of career and labour market information resources in both print an d electronic forms, and can access these through libraries located on-site. Career services can be offered to students on a stand-alone basis, but are most often combined with other generic student and/or employment services. Faculties or institutional departments can also play a role in assisting students with their career development, usually by virtue of their involvement in students' academic planning. Reference has already been made to the involvement of faculties and departments in providing information on graduate employment opportunities and establishing strong networks and work experience opportunities with potential employers. Access to all of these services is voluntary and is initiated by the student.

The SATCC is responsible for the management and administration of apprenticeship. As such, the organization has been providing career development services and support to working people and their employers for many years. Beginning with an entry-level worker, the SATCC works one-on-one with the apprentice and employer to achieve the desired outcome: a skilled, certified tradesperson. The career development supports and services that the SATCC provides to individuals are assessment and recognition of prior learning and experience counselling, training, certification, career information, and marketing and promotion of the trades as a desirable career path.

All of these services are critical to improving inclusiveness at key transition points across the education and training system, especially where the system intersects with the labour market. In a model that is based on lifelong learning, cycling between work and learning can be frequent. It is at these points of transition that individuals can falter, and if the resources required are not available and it is unclear where to get information and advice, opportunities that could enable learners to further their life goals may be lost.

Lifelong career development is inherently part of a lifelong learning approach. It can be enhanced by having services and supports integrated within operations at all levels of the system and following a continuum rather than merely being provided at key transition points. A smoothing of obstacles encountered in transition can enables accrediting prior learning that recognizes experience and real competence, regardless where this learning has occurred. Case management and portfolio development are other mechanisms that allow for career information services and guidance to be interconnected so that users do not constantly have to repeat steps such as receiving information, making decisions and drawing up a new career plan at every service delivery point.

Institutional segmentation of services creates inefficiencies and gaps. Users need to find a seamless flow of services that are linked, coherent, meaningful, accessible and useful. A critical factor enabling strong interconnection and coherence within the system is the involvement of multiple stakeholders and multiple delivery agencies. Concerted policy planning and collaboration is required between all levels within the education and training system to create the necessary continuity. If all these levels work together to create a common vision, parameters and standards of operation, and the distribution and approach to service provision and marketing across the system, it is likely that efficiencies will be gained (e.g., sharing of resources, removal of service duplication, etc.) and gaps in services filled.

The literature emphasizes the need for a seamless, integrated and coherent system as the best means of meeting the needs of individuals, parents, communities and employers. It is important to develop an overarching policy and strategy for its implementation. In addition, there needs to be agreement on the roles and involvement of all stakeholders in the provision of career services. Partnership and collaboration within the learning system and beyond is also necessary. There needs to be a focus on continuous improvement, quality assurance and accountability[11].

In order to ensure that the system is integrated, coherent and follows a consistent vision, it is critically important for all providers and stakeholders to jointly take stock of the strengths and weaknesses of their overall service provision; they must also jointly plan, implement, and sustain the reforms that are required by the new career development paradigm. Career development services need to appear to consumers as a seamless flow of services that are linked, coherent, meaningful, accessible and useful. The shift required by a lifelong career development approach entails coordinated and strategic leadership, facilitated by structures and mechanisms such as advisory or coordinating bodies and organized forums where stakeholders - including those representing consumer perspectives - are actively involved in policy development, planning, implementation and maintenance of reforms[12,13,14].

Improved coordination is needed between sectors and between government and other stakeholders. In particular there is in many cases a need for stronger co-operation between education and employment. Because career development supports people's pathways between learning and work, it needs to operate at the interface between the two. Where links between them are weak, gaps occur in service for those who are not directly connected within the learning system. Examples of those who are likely to fall through the cracks are those who leave school early and are neither in the labour market nor in education, or women wishing to return to work who need upgrading after an absence from the workforce. Another consequence of weak coordination is that career development can become unbalanced by concentrating on the education/training side of the career path without taking into account the employment consequences of these choices[15].

The Panel recommends:

54. Adherence to principles of the New Training Model be emphasized as the most effective way of achieving of a lifelong, inclusive system.

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[11] Bezanson, L. & Kellett, R. (2001). *Integrating Career Information and Guidance Services at the Local Level*. Commissioned jointly by the European Commission and the OECD.

[12] Sultana, R. G. (2004). *Guidance Policies in the Knowledge Society: Trends, Challenges and Responses across Europe*. A CEDFOP synthesis report. Euro-Mediterranean Center for Educational Research: University of Malta.

[13] Bezanson, L. & Kellett, R. (2001). *Integrating Career Information and Guidance Services at the Local Level*. Commissioned jointly by the European Commission and the OECD.

[14] OECD. (2004). Career *Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers*. Author.

[15] Sultana, R. G. (2004). Guidance *Policies in the Knowledge Society: Trends, Challenges and Responses across Europe*. A CEDFOP synthesis report. Euro-Mediterranean Center for Educational Research: University of Malta.

7.8 Partnerships

One of the ways that inclusiveness can be enhanced is through partnerships. Partnerships draw upon the capacity and assets of the people and communities. They lead to improved understanding and communications and provide an effective means for co-management. They draw upon key leadership in communities and help ensure that there is a cultural alignment of processes and decision-making. Bridging people from unemployment to training and from training to work often requires partnerships to create trust and credibility.

Partnerships signal respect if they are entered into in good faith. Partnerships with First Nation and Métis institutions make a substantial contribution toward meeting goals. Saskatchewan Aboriginal post-secondary training institutions are effective in developing and delivering programming, increasing student retention and developing a sense of priority and ownership in the Aboriginal communities. So too are partnerships with communities and Aboriginal employers. More information sharing and better communications are needed, however, to fully realize the role of partnerships.

The role of partnerships is not limited to meeting participation goals for Aboriginal people. Industry partnerships are extremely important to access resources, ensure that training is relevant and ensure employability. Two excellent partnerships which serve the system well operate in the North. The first is a multi-party initiative linking training to employment in the mineral sector. This is administered by mineral industry representatives and supported by the Aboriginal and provincial governments. This initiative has won national and provincial awards for innovation in partnerships. Another is the training-to-employment Forestry Partnership to address skill and training needs to support employment in the provincial forestry-related industries. There are also many industry-based training partnerships involving the Regional Colleges and the institutes.

Partnerships are expected to become increasingly important in the training system. The Panel welcomes this trend. It is expected that through time, partnerships will dominate the training system, blurring the traditional lines of authority and accountability. This will expand the resources within the system, improve its relevance to communities and employers, and bring new perspectives and understanding.

The effectiveness of and potential for partnerships to enhance the system depends on strong working relationships and clear understandings about expectations and obligations. One of the problems that the Panel has noted is that these conditions are not always met. The Panel believes that while guidance on developing effective partnerships, developing and negotiating agreements, and making partnerships work would be helpful, each training institution and organization is ultimately responsible for its own partnerships.

The Panel recommends:

55. **Partnerships be encouraged to enhance inclusiveness, as well as expand resources and improve the quality of learning.**

56. Saskatchewan Learning develop the capacity and resources to provide guidance and assistance in developing effective partnerships, developing and negotiating agreements and making partnerships work.

8

Capacity, Financing and Federal Government Participation

Chapter 8: Capacity, Financing and Federal Government Participation

8.1 Capacity and Financing of the System

There can be little doubt the public training system has reached its capacity with existing resources and assets. As indicated in Chapter 5, annual amounts of training in the system, including by major category, have remained relatively static. The numbers participating in the system in aggregate have not changed to any significant degree. There has been an increase in industry training, but this has been largely on a contract basis with SIAST, the Regional Colleges and the Aboriginal institutes.

The main factors regulating participation are constraints on facilities and laboratory and shop equipment in selected locations, insufficient availability of employers to oversee work experience components of some training programs, finances to support additional program development, conversion of curricula to alternate delivery methodologies, innovation and course offerings.

- ***Facilities and Equipment***

  The Panel recognizes there is a need for some new capital investments in the training system. Problems with respect to buildings and shops are most pressing at SIAST, Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon, followed by SIAST, Palliser Campus in Moose Jaw. There is also a need for some upgrading of facilities in some rural areas, and in the North. Specific needs for new facilities should be addressed through the annual capital budgeting processes of the government. Expansion of facilities at SIAST should be approved on the condition that the number of students completing programs increases consistent with the overall numbers for the system proposed by the Panel. However, expenditures must be managed carefully in order not to prejudice the further decentralization of training, and all facilities upgrades and new facilities should be required to provide evidence of design features that support decentralized, off campus, flexible delivery.

  The Panel believes the use of mobile shops and private sector facilities must be brought into the system to meet the course requirements for of offerings in rural and northern locations. It has been proposed to the Panel by presenters in a number of rural and northern locations that private sector shops and plants be used to support the classroom component of instruction. The Panel supports this approach which is in keeping with the New Training Model. We heard from a number of private sectors operators that they are prepared to work with the training system provided there is some flexibility in the approach to the use of facilities. The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) has recently deployed a mobile trades facility in order to support the decentralized offerings of trades courses. The Saskatchewan training system should do likewise on an urgent basis.

The advisory committees that provide advice and direction to the Apprenticeship Commission and to SIAST programs need to support this kind of flexible approach to training. The Panel has been told there is some resistance at this level to innovation that supports flexibility and decentralization. In order to be successful, it is important that there be full buy-in to the principles of the NTM. Saskatchewan Learning and the major participants in the system must provide leadership and direction to ensure that support for innovation and change is consistently provided.

The Panel recommends:

57. **The need in some rural and northern locations for facilities upgrading be recognized, and that private sector shops and plants be used to support the classroom component of instruction wherever possible.**

58. **A mobile trades facility to support decentralized offerings of trades courses, like the one recently deployed by The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, be a priority investment of the training system.**

59. **The need for expanded facilities at the Kelsey Campus of SIAST be addressed.**

60. **The need for facilities and equipment renewal at the Palliser Campus be recognized.**

- *Operating Finances*

Training is one of the most important strategic investments that will be made in the province over the next few years. The single most important factor limiting growth in the system is operating support. Increased capacity will require additional investments to support the operation of the system. A commitment to expand the capacity of the system through increased spending is essential.

The Panel hastens to add that money alone will not address the needs and challenges facing the system. The way that money is used will also be extremely important. It must be spent by the system consistent with the principles of the NTM. These will not be repeated here, but they must not be lost as new money is injected into the system.

To understand how the training system is currently funded, it is useful to review how the public training system is financed. The following is the history of funding for the four institutional components of the system for which the provincial government is responsible.

SIAST:

- In nominal dollars, the SIAST total funding increased by $21.5 million (33%) between 1992/93 and 2005/06. Operating grants increased by $14.9 million, program training increased by $5.6 million, and distance learning by $.9 million;
- The average nominal annual increase for the first six years of the period was $.5 million, and for the last six years, $3 million. The average annual increase for the period was $1.7 million;
- In constant dollars, the SIAST total funding increased by $0.8 million (1%) between 1992/93 and 2005/2006. Operating grants declined by $3 million, program training increased by $3.1 million, and distance learning increased by $.7 million;
- The average constant dollars annual change for the first six years of the period was an annual average decrease of $0.8million, and for the last six years, was an annual average increase of $0.9 million. The average constant dollar annual increase for the period was $61,000;
- Since 1997/98, nominal dollar increases have related primarily to operating grants for collective bargaining and pay equity and to a much smaller degree, increasing capacity for health-related programs, e.g., Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS), the Practical Nursing Program, and a computer sciences expansion; and,
- On a constant dollar basis, yearly increases have, with few exceptions, not kept pace with inflation since 1992/93.

Regional Colleges:

- In nominal dollars, Regional Colleges total funding increased by $15.8 million (92%) between 1992/93 and 2005/06. Operating grants increased by $10.2 million, training increased by $6 million, and distance learning decreased by $0.4 million;
- The average nominal annual increase for the first six years of the period was $1.9 million, and for the last six years, $0.7 million. The average annual increase for the period was $1.2 million;
- In constant dollars, Regional Colleges total funding increased by $7.8 million (46%) between 1992/93 and 2005/06. Operating grants declined by $6.3 million, training increased by $2.2 million, and distance learning decreased by $0.7 million;
- The average constant dollars annual change for the first six years of the period was an annual average decrease of $1.3 million, which for the last six years declined to an annual average decrease of $34,000. The average constant dollar annual increase for the period was $0.6 million;
- Since 2000/01, nominal dollar increases for operating grants have related primarily to operating grants for collective bargaining and pay equity. In 2000/01, $1 million was reduced from the accumulated surplus of the Regional Colleges. This reduction was reinstated in 2001/02;

- Program funding increased dramatically beginning in 1997/98 as the result of the introduction of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy and the shift to complement the government's Rural Revitalization Strategy; and,
- In 1998/99, funding increased significantly to reflect the transfer of program dollars from the federal government to the provincial government through the signing of the Labour Market Development Agreement.

Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission:

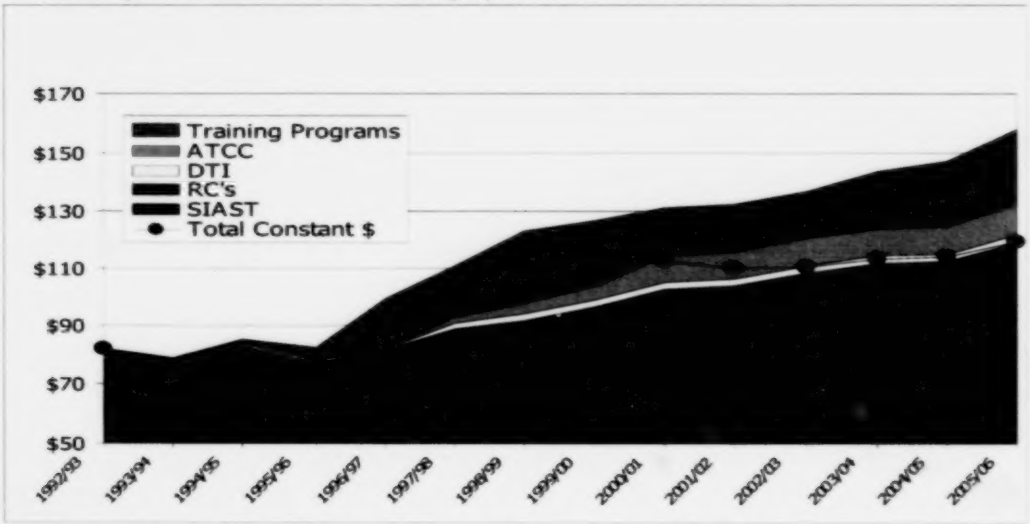
- Its first full year of operation was 2000/01. Since its inception, it has received increases commensurate with the operating grant increases of the other training institutions to cover collective agreement and pay equity costs. In 2001/02, the SATCC received additional funding ($400,000) for Aboriginal apprenticeship; and,
- Funding has remained stable in constant dollars.

Overall Training System:

The following Figure 8.1 summarizes the overall funding to the training system, including DTI, from 1992/93 to 2005/06.

Figure 8.1

Funding the Saskatchewan Training System, 1993/94 to 2005/06.

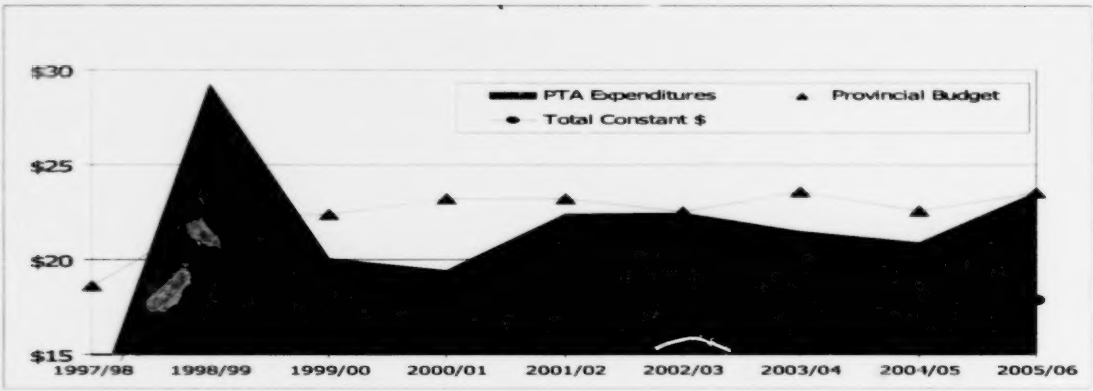


Source: Saskatchewan Learning

As can be seen from this table, between 1995/96 and 2005/06, the provincial operating expenditures on training increased from approximately $80M to approximately $110 million in constant dollars (i.e., after taking out the impact of inflation). This includes all programs and institutions. This is an increase of about 38%.

Since 2001/02, the constant dollar amount has been relatively stable, declining somewhat for the first two years, and then increasing slightly over the next three years. The annual amount in the first year of the five year period is about the same as in 2005/06, in constant dollar terms. In nominal dollars, the expenditures in 2005/06 will be slightly in excess of $150 million.

Figure 8.2



Source: Saskatchewan Learning

An additional cost of training to government, over and above that of the programming costs, are those associated with living allowances for students/participants in need. The above Figure 8.2 contains the amounts associated with the PTA, which is the largest component of such costs. The current estimated required expenditures for PTA have been about $23 million annually for the last five years. The current year will be the first for which this amount will actually be spent.

- ***CareerStart Plus***

The Panel projects that a 30% increase over the 2004/05 levels in all categories of training must be achieved over the next five years. A question worth asking is whether any of this increase can be realized through productivity gains within the system. If so, the costs of the additional training could be partially offset by cost reductions.

It does not appear there have been any such gains over the past five years. In fact, over this period there would appear to have been a decline in participation in the training system. Reports show that there has been a decline in diplomas and certificates granted, apprentices served, work based training placements provided, basic education enrollments and regional college attendance. The decline in certificates and diplomas seems to be accounted for by those issued by smaller non-SIAST institutions, since in the case of SIAST, there has been little change over the period.

> One difficulty with using the measures of participation is that the specific mix and character of programs changes over time. An example might be a shift to programs involving longer periods of training time. This would be recognized as an increased output if measures were completely comparable. Unfortunately, there is no system reporting of data that would permit such an analysis. However, in general we do not see much evidence suggesting that such changes have taken place to a great extent.

This being the case, it is apparent that there has not been any major improvement in productivity within the training system. Real costs have remained constant and numbers have not increased. This is somewhat of a puzzle since there has been considerable innovation in the system. This report has summarized innovations in the use of technology and in instructional methods, much of it on the basis of the leadership of Saskatchewan Learning and the institutions.

Since a number of these innovations have been based on the NTM, this appears to raise questions about whether it can contribute to productivity improvements in the system. The Panel believes that the NTM, if applied properly, can substantially improve the productivity and, thus, the cost-effectiveness of the system. While it is disappointing that the overall level of participation has not increased significantly over the past five years, notwithstanding many innovations consistent with the NTM, the likely reason is that there is a lag between the commencement of innovation and the time when gains begin to be experienced due to developmental time and costs. It is also likely that a relatively limited program of investment and facilities over the period has complicated the ability to realize productivity gains.

While confident about the long-term productivity gains from innovation, the Panel is not overly optimistic about the early realization of such gains. Internal productivity will take time to be realized. It is not something that can be relied upon to help expand capacity in the near future.

Thus, if the system is to meet the challenge over the next five years, capacity will have to be expanded though an injection of new resources. More faculty and staff will be needed, more investments in innovation will be required, more course and program development will have to be undertaken, more courses will have to be offered, and more support will have to be supplied for instruction and for students.

It is recognized that there are real systemic constraints that will make the proposed 30% increase in participation a challenge. Students must be encouraged to study in trades and technical fields more effectively than in the past. A great deal more effort needs to be devoted to effective partnerships with First Nations and other measures to recruit and support First Nation and Métis participation. Improved literacy, essential skills, and mathematics and sciences preparation are all needed badly. It will be necessary to address the problem of inadequate numbers of employers prepared to provide the workplace component in an adequate manner. This is particularly a problem with apprentices, preceptor programs in the health occupations, and some of the essential skills training programs.

These and other constraints simply reinforce the obvious. Accelerated participation will only be possible if the system works together toward a shared vision and the actions of each part support the whole. And it will only be possible if there are extra resources. If training is to be increased, there will also have to be decisions about the kinds of training and the categories of training that should be increased. The Panel has concluded that the categories of training now supported in the system are appropriate and that all need to expand roughly in the same proportion. Basic Education, including essential skills and literacy, apprenticeable trades, pre-employment certificates and diplomas, and work-based training are all needed in a balanced system. Under the leadership of the department, the balance between these categories is good. Therefore, expansion needs to be pursued in all categories.

The Panel has concluded that, in general, it would be a mistake to go further and to define particular occupations that should be emphasized more than others. System-wide planning processes must decide this level of detail within the system. That is something the system must do using labour market and other relevant data. Priorities are an issue, and we know that the trades, the health sectors, and occupations related to the resources sectors are key priorities. But the Panel is confident that provided the system works within the framework established in this report, it can and will respond to the specific occupational needs and opportunities.

The provincial government has already committed to part of this expansion in participation. The CareerStart initiative, implemented in 2005/06, aims to increase the capacity of the training system by 3,827 participants by the end of 2007/08. The proposal of the Panel increases this commitment to another 7,823 participants by 2010/11. Given that the CareerStart is only beginning now, the Panel has chosen to integrate the CareerStart numbers into its proposed expansion. Separating the CareerStart projections from the Panel projections would be confusing and add nothing to the proposals.

For the province of Saskatchewan, the CareerStart Plus involves substantial additional budgetary expenditures. The Panel does not believe that this increased burden should fall solely on provincial taxpayers. There must be an equitable distribution of the burden between the federal and provincial governments. In order to achieve this, a new relationship with the federal government needs to be forged.

The Panel recommends:

61. **Training over the next five years, known as CareerStart Plus, be increased by 30% over the 2004/05 levels (2005/06 CareerStart commitments be included as part of the proposed expansion).**

8.2 A New Relationship with the Federal Government

An effective partnership is essential if the training system is to achieve what the Panel is proposing. This is true for a number of reasons.

One is that federal finances are needed to be injected into the system to make the undertakings outlined in the report affordable.

A second is that the federal government already has a substantial presence with the Saskatchewan LMDA and the two AHRDAs in the province. Through these two vehicles, about $80 million of federal money is spent on training. There are other smaller federal initiatives as well.

The third is that the federal government is committed to spending more on training. It is unclear how much more, and it is unclear how it will be spent. However, there are at least five reasons to expect greater federal spending:

- The money committed under the second budget bill in May 2005 has money committed to post-secondary education, including training;
- The Saskatchewan Accord requires that some considerable amount of the extra money committed be spent on training;
- The federal government has committed to increased spending on the education and training needs of Aboriginal people;
- The federal government has committed to a new literacy agenda; and,
- The federal government has stated that investments in human capital are a high priority.

A problem, however, is that there has been very little transparency to date about federal plans. No specifics are being made available. This makes it very difficult to plan a seamless system that meets the objectives and criteria set out in this report. It has been seen that separate initiatives by the federal government can cause fragmentation, duplication, and gaps. This is not to suggest that a federal presence is in itself a bad thing. However, if an integrated and seamless system is to be realized, arrangements are needed to minimize fragmentation.

One possibility is that the province, anticipate federal interests and accommodate them as best as possible. There should be many elements of common interest. For example, it can be expected that the federal government will be in agreement with the emphasis on the NTM. It also can be expected that the federal government will want visibility, recognition, accountability in terms of agreed goals and a direct relationship with individuals and institutions. All of these things should be possible within a new relationship.

The Panel believes that there are several possible ways to configure the federal system to accommodate the federal interests and to encourage co-operation.

The Panel has already suggested that the province extend its support to programming on-reserves and to that of the SIIT. The Panel is assuming that the AHRDAs will continue, but in a form that will encourage coordination and integration within the system. The Panel also believes that it is necessary that the LMDA continues. This is one of the foundations for cooperative federalism in the training field.

The Panel already has reported its observation that the federal government is committed to major initiatives in literacy and human capital development. Both are supported by recent OECD reports and reports from the federal government itself. The Panel is also aware that the federal government, for its own reasons, is not enthusiastic about transferring any of the new monies that it makes available to the provincial governments for administration. The federal government reportedly prefers direct contributions to individuals and institutions.

The Panel sees little harm in direct federal contributions to institutions in the training system. Problems will arise, however, if the federal government places conditions on such money in a way that fragments the system, sets provincial priorities through specific criteria, encourages over-lap and duplication, and creates disputes about who should be doing what. In other words, there is a need for federal resources to be supportive and federal policies to be harmonized with that of the provincial system. The real difficulty is to devise mechanisms that can allow for separate federal identity and presence, while at the same time assuring system integration and harmonization.

A few years ago, the federal government established a number of foundations to finance health care, research, and activities. A variation on this approach might be attractive as a mechanism to devote resources to the training system in a coordinated way.

A new Skills Foundation, mandated to invest in training and human capital investments in Saskatchewan, could be used as both a financing vehicle for the federal government and as an instrument to harmonize federal government spending with the investment strategies of the provincial government. The Skills Foundation could be provided with a federal endowment to be spent over a certain number of years to support expansion in training in Saskatchewan. It might, for instance, be provided with $75M to be spent over the next five years. The province could make a commitment of a similar amount for purposes of increasing training in accordance with a mutually-agreeable agenda. The provincial contribution could be placed into the Skills Foundation, or could be provided through a parallel process that would ensure coordination and harmonization.

The Skills Foundation would be mandated to provide support to individuals and to employers and to provide funding to public institutions in the province. Employers and individuals receiving funding through it would be required to provide programs and courses recognized for credit in Saskatchewan. It could be directed by a joint management board made up of federal and provincial representatives.

One possibility that might be pursued under such an approach would be to redistribute some responsibilities within the training system. For instance, it might be that all supports to individuals would come from this Skills Foundation, as well as programs such as essential skills, literacy and on-the-job training. In return, the province would undertake to devote all savings it achieves as a result of the federal government foundation assuming these costs. The province would also agree to a net increase in spending, equal to that of the federal government, on training, including equitable operating support for SIIT and reserve-based programming by the Regional Colleges and SIAST (on a non-competitive, collaborative basis with SIIT).

A new relationship of this sort would have some attractive features and some less attractive features. The federal government may not be entirely pleased that the leadership and direction of training would remain with the province. However, it would have assurances of increased investments by the province in training and that such investments would include SIIT capacity and programs for First Nations people on reserves.

The provincial government may not like the arrangement because additional funds would not likely go to the province. However, it seems unlikely that this is going to happen. In the absence of a new relationship, there is a danger that the federal government will move ahead with its own initiatives, causing increased fragmentation. It might also prefer the status quo with respect to First Nations, although given the need for trained workers there are real benefits to becoming directly involved in mobilizing potential First Nations workers.

The Panel recommends:

62. **The federal and provincial governments pursue a new relationship based on joint goals, performance objectives, and accountability measures, related to the financing of skills training.**

63. **The federal government be invited to establish a new Skills Foundation in Saskatchewan which would be endowed by the federal government and supported by the provincial government:**

    - **Any savings accruing to the province as a net result of this foundation (assuming additional training expenditures), would be rededicated to increased training support by the province (including equitable support for SIIT and reserve based programming by the Regional Colleges and SIAST - where it would not compete with SIIT).**

8.3 Financing Mechanisms

Questions arise with regard to the appropriate mechanisms for financing training. This becomes particularly important if funding is to be used to realize expansion.

The present system provides each institution with an annual allocation divided between categories. In general, Adult Basic Education, technical training, apprentice training and work-based training each receive separate allocations within the overall block of money provided to the institutions.

The colleges have asked for more flexibility so that money can be shifted from one category to another. The Panel supports this flexibility. Conditional funding can interfere with the ability of those providing training, working with the learner, to make good choices.

The Panel supports less conditionality in funding, providing there is meaningful accountability and there are sufficient incentives within the accountability framework to ensure that results are consistent with expectations. Again, this is important if additional resources are premised on expansion. There are many examples within post-secondary education funding of increases premised on expansion being provided only to have the additional enrolments never occur.

In the context of the expectations set out in this report, future financing of the system should be focused on achieving results. The needs are clear. Increasing participation is required. Financing should be results-driven.

However, that does not mean finances should be totally open-ended and determined only by demand. From a public finance perspective, it is not advisable for governments to make open such open-ended commitments. Government needs to be sure that its commitments are predictable and controllable.

In order to achieve this, the Panel recommends that the government make a five year commitment to fund the training system based on a per participant payment or rate that it would apply to providers of specified forms of training. In effect, the government would establish a price that it would pay for results. This would put the onus on the system to deliver. Such a system would have many attractive features given the need for rapid improvements on the skill levels of the population. It would establish the general financial parameters in order to generate a supply response from the system.

However, it is hard to establish a standard measure of what is being provided. The government could end up paying more money for less product. Standards are needed. Within this, it must be recognized that some types of training used to increase participation will be more costly than others.

Extra capital expenditures will be required in some cases. However, the Panel is confident that the capital budgeting system can handle this.

Results-based funding must be the priority. In order to achieve this, the Panel recommends that Saskatchewan Learning enter into new Accords with all of the institutions. The Accords will set out expectations regarding participation, measures of effort, measures of success and accountability mechanisms. Those that do not measure up should not share in the increased resources being made available.

The highest priority must be on the need for rapid expansion in capacity with the quality of programs being retained. The suggested Accords throughout the system will be a vehicle of obtaining commitment to the common project of increasing participation in accordance with the recommendations and projections of this report. This will require a relatively complex system of planning and implementation commitments. Care needs to be taken not to undermine the ability to adapt to the NTM through financing measures.

The Panel believes that the system can and should be financed through a results driven framework based on participation increases. Such increases are needed across all of the major categories: apprenticeable trades, basic education, including essential skills and literacy, technical certificates and diplomas and work-based training. It is assumed that industry training will grow rapidly, but that it will be financed by employers and industry organizations.

The Panel recommends:

64. **Saskatchewan Learning enter into Accords with all of the institutions, setting out expectations regarding participation, expected effort, measures of success, and accountability mechanisms.**

65. **Training be funded on a results based system.**

9

Performance Assessment and Accountability

Chapter 9: Performance Assessment and Accountability

Accountability is important in public institutions for a number of reasons, some obvious and some less so. It is needed so that the public and users can see how it is working and what it is accomplishing. It is needed so that the government, Ministers and Legislators can critically examine, review and assess performance. It is also needed for the often-stated reason that there is no equivalent to profits, which provides an easy measure in the private sector to assess performance. Additionally, it is needed as a form of creative tension to innovate and improve, such as is generated through competition in the public sector. The Panel has observed that the training system needs to be dynamic and innovative with a capacity to advance creative strategies and approaches to the radically new labour market challenges of the future.

Issues related to accountability and performance assessment were raised on numerous occasions. Presenters expressed the view that many of the training system institutions have become isolated and removed from employers and learners. In their view, training system institutions do not engage in meaningful dialogue with stakeholders and partners, do not provide answers about performance measurement, nor do they make available relevant data on outcomes and impacts.

9.1 Current State

Public training system institutions/organizations are governed by either government appointed boards (SIAST, the Regional Colleges) or industry boards (SATCC). These Boards are responsible to conduct and manage the business and affairs of the institutions/ organizations and ensure operations are conducted in accordance with provincial legislation. The legislation also lays out the unique accountability relationships between the Minister and each of these boards.

Government has implemented a government-wide Accountability Framework based on planning, performance management, (including risk management and program evaluation), and reporting. In implementing the framework, government determined that, because of the critical role sector partners play in achieving expected outcomes, a sector-wide plan would be most appropriate for the learning sector. In response to this direction, a Learning Sector Performance Plan, including a set of performance measures, was developed. The Learning Sector Steering Committee[16] (LSSC), chaired by the Deputy Minister, Department of Learning, was created to collaboratively determine sector-wide priorities for action and a sector strategic plan. A public annual report, produced by the department, describes sector-wide accomplishments, outputs, outcomes and impacts. The sector planning process and the sector plan are then linked to government's budget process aligning sector planning, budgeting and reporting activities.

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[16] The LSSC includes executive representation from the following key partners: Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA), Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS), the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO), the Multi-Type Library Board, Public Libraries, the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan, FNUC, SIAST, Regional Colleges, the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC), the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS) private vocational schools, and the department.

The training system is a unique part of the learning sector with objectives which are common across the province's system of education and training and with other objectives which are of particular importance to it alone. Although at this point, there is no formal coordination and planning processes unique to the training system, Chapter 9 recommends initiation of a Saskatchewan Training System Planning and Coordinating Council to lead the development and coordination of system-wide activities.

In addition to the sector planning process, institutions/organizations within the public training system develop annual Business Plans which are expected to be aligned with the Learning Sector Performance Plan. Business Plans are reviewed by the Department and are approved by the Minister. Each training system institution/organization also prepares its own public annual report.

9.2 Information Systems

In the late 1990s, each of the Regional Colleges had a different student information system – some were electronic, some had been developed by the individual college, some were purchased software and some were paper-based.

In 2000, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by all college CEOs and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (later the Department of Learning), initiated a project to develop a common electronic student information system (SIS). The SIS was designed to meet the department's need to report on client performance under the LMDA, for comparable system-wide data, and a need for all Regional Colleges to have electronic systems and be able to report electronically. In 2004, a review of the SIS was undertaken in response to the Regional Colleges' expressed dissatisfaction with the SIS's functionality and implementation. The outcome of the review was agreement by the CEOs and the department to maintain the SIS and a renewed commitment to work collaboratively to develop an action plan in response to the review recommendations. Disagreement remains about the utility and effectiveness of the SIS - some colleges continue to lobby to have the SIS expanded while other colleges indicate it should be discontinued and replaced with a commercial system (e.g., Banner software).

The SATCC also uses the electronic information system which was developed by the department and which continues to be compatible with other department systems.

SIAST uses the Banner system as its student information system. The Banner system is not linked to the department's IT systems, and any data sent from SIAST to the department is transferred via data files.

9.3 Reviews and Evaluations

The department regularly evaluates programs and services which are delivered by the training system (e.g., ABE, JobStart/Future Skills, etc.) or are available to students (e.g., PTA, etc.) and employers/industry (e.g., Sector Partnerships, etc.) within the training system but which are developed or managed by the department. Over the past several years evaluations (or reviews) have been done on the Employment Programs, the SIS, the PTA, the ABE, the Sector Partnerships, the Construction Careers Project and JobStart/Future Skills. The results from these evaluations and reviews are posted on the department's website. The evaluation findings are used to inform ongoing development and operation of programs and services.

SIAST conducts regular reviews of all its programs including surveys of the satisfaction level of employers and students, and a review of the industry/occupation's employment trends. SIAST's program content reviews include external and internal components; however, only the findings of the external process are made public. SIAST also reports publicly on the following student and program outcomes: SIAST Graduate Employment, SIAST Graduate Employment Indicators, Accreditation Status of SIAST Programs and SIAST Education Equity Program Annual Monitoring.

Both the Regional Colleges and SIAST do follow-up surveys and record training outcomes (e.g., employment, further education or training) for students who complete ABE and JobStart/Future Skills. These survey results reflect the activity of students at least 90 days following completion of their program. Although this data is collected, it is not made public.

9.4 Reporting requirements – Federal/Provincial Agreements

The province and the federal government have several agreements (*Canada – Saskatchewan Agreement on Labour Market Development* (LMDA), *Federal/Provincial/Territorial Labour Market Development Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, Canada – Saskatchewan Integration Agreement for the Harmonization and Administration of Federal and Provincial Student Loans Programs)* which impact program delivery, students and business/industry. These agreements require the province to report on inputs, outcomes and impacts. As well, most federal/provincial agreements require some type of program evaluation, frequently with both formative and summative evaluations.

9.5 Information and Data Requirements

The Panel found that during the review it did not have all the tools and information needed to make an informed evaluation of organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Data was not consistently available and systems for ready evaluation of performance, particularly as related to effectiveness and efficiency, were not available. We heard concerns expressed about coherence within the system relative to goals and expectations, and about whether it meets the standards of flexibility, responsiveness and that management needed to perform effectively in meeting the rapidly evolving labour market needs that must be addressed (e.g., program operations occurring primarily from fall to early/mid spring, raising questions about how efficiently facilities are utilized within the existing business model, etc.). Currently, effectiveness measures are not reported on the basis of a comparative benchmark, such as performance of similar institutions in other jurisdictions, and there is no systematic reporting on policy expectations set out for the system and actions taken in response. A comprehensive set of performance measures specific to the training system needs to be identified and reported on. In a rapidly changing environment, it is important that reviews or audits of effectiveness and efficiency be undertaken at regular intervals.

Aggregation and analysis of post-secondary student/graduate data is difficult as institutions have different and continuously evolving data definitions and different, frequently incompatible information systems. Such data inconsistencies make data comparisons difficult at best and impossible at worst. Some post-secondary data from the training system is either not available or not readily accessible. Reliable data and data analysis are both critical in the assessment and reporting of performance.

The need for enhanced information on both the post-secondary education system and post-secondary graduates is a national concern. Based on this need, Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) collaborated to develop a national Enhanced Student Information System (ESIS). In order to build a comprehensive picture of student flows within and between Canadian institutions, ESIS is designed to follow public post-secondary students throughout their academic careers. ESIS has the capacity to take differing institutional data definitions and covert them to a consistent definition. Once fully-implemented, ESIS will enable development of sample frames for various surveys, including graduate follow-up surveys that can be used by all participating partners. At this point, ESIS is limited to public training and education institutions (universities, institutes, and colleges); however, there are plans to include private post-secondary institutions and Apprenticeship into ESIS at some time in the future. When fully operational, ESIS is expected to support the provinces' need for comparable post-secondary data and information which will support provincial research, analysis, planning and reporting.

The provincial budget process and the government-wide accountability framework require the system to report on inputs, outputs and outcomes. Comparable provincial data, consistent data definitions and accurate, timely data would contribute to more reliable reporting and a more accurate, qualitative assessment of how well the training system is meeting its objectives.

The availability of longitudinal students/graduates data would enhance the training system's ability to critically analyze the factors affecting outcomes and to plan strategies to mitigate negative influences and strengthen positive factors.

Minimal research on the outcomes and impacts of training on students, business and industry, and the province, is currently produced by the system. Most of what is done is undertaken by SIAST. While the system is not funded to do significant primary or secondary research, there are many training phenomena which are not clearly understood and which require testing within a Saskatchewan context. As the training system moves to an increasingly evidence based style of decision-making, the need for additional research activity will become imperative. Increased levels of research will demand reliable, comprehensive and comparable data sources.

All public provincial post-secondary institutions, including the training system, are currently collaborating on a research project which surveys Grade 12 students regarding their intentions beyond high school. It is anticipated this research will provide longitudinal data on the outcomes of high school graduates. As well, a post-secondary graduate follow-up survey is being developed through a collaborative approach with the post-secondary institutions, including the training system. It is expected these two surveys will provide an opportunity to access information that supports accountability, labour market information, marketing, program evaluation and research, and policy development.

The Panel recommends:

66. **Annually senior Saskatchewan Learning officials meet with the Boards and senior management of each public training system institution and organization to review expectations based on a system-wide Strategic Plan and Expectations Report.**

67. **Each year Saskatchewan Learning and each training system institution or organization enter into an annual Performance Contract, accompanied by an annual Policy Directive, setting out the policy direction governing it, including the outcomes and expectations and the accountability for implementing policy effectively and efficiently.**

68. **Consistent and comprehensive system-wide public reporting on the training system outcomes and impacts be implemented.**

69. **New IT system development be reviewed and efforts made to ensure compatibility with existing training system systems.**

70. **Initiation of a training system research agenda and collaborative research teams with potential membership from all types of training programs, including Aboriginal institutions/organizations and private vocational schools, be encouraged to investigate issues of common concern.**

71. Efficiency and effectiveness audits be made a standard part of the five year reviews of the training system organizations and institutions in the future, and provided to the review committee to assist it in its work.

10

Apprentices, Work Experience, Co-operative Learning, and On-the-Job Training

Chapter 10: Apprentices, Work Experience, Co-operative Learning, and On the Job Training

SIAST, the Regional Colleges, DTI, SIIT, and SATCC are the major public training institutions/organizations which offer trades and technical training. These institutions and organizations use different instructional methods and pedagogies, including apprenticeships, co-operative education, internships, clinical placements, and work-based training. Many learning experiences are offered in conjunction with business and industry and occur at the actual worksite.

The Panel found that there is almost universal enthusiasm for work experience throughout all kinds of training. In the schools, it prepares students for the world of work and provides an introduction into different kinds of work. For certificate, diploma and degree programs, it improves quality and provides grounding in the actual work that must be done. Some kinds of skills and competencies cannot effectively be taught in any other way. It also introduces students to future employers and helps employers identify potential staff. For essential skills and specific competencies, on the job training, supplemented with other information and teaching, can be far more effective than alternatives. In industry, very often the emphasis is actually reversed where work is the main training venue, supplemented by certain amounts of other forms of instruction.

10.1 Scope of Work Experience Training

Work experience - is a component of a program that has an on-the-job placement, supervised by the employer and monitored for quality by a training system instructor. Work experience is a requirement for graduating in a number of training system programs. The learner receives a mark for completing the work experience; however, no credits are awarded. The minimum length of time for this type of experience is one week.

Cooperative Education - incorporates productive work experiences as a regular and integral part of a student's learning program. Cooperative education enhances academic studies and provides students with work-related skills and employer contacts that assist in finding permanent employment after graduation. As well, students can explore career options while earning money to help pay for their training. Cooperative education is a three-way partnership between the student, the educational institution, and employers. It integrates classroom theory with related work experience by alternating the academic terms with paid work terms. During the work terms, the student's progress is supervised and evaluated by the student's employer. The total duration of the work terms for any cooperative education student is approximately 50% of the total duration of the academic term.

Internships – serve to enhance the educational experience of students by adding a work experience that integrates conceptual and applied learning in the workplace. Although, the definition of internships varies by program and institution, it usually describes a student or a recent graduate undergoing supervised practical training.

Clinical Placements - provide students with the opportunity to combine classroom theory with practice to acquire essential workplace skills. Learners, usually in health programs, spend a specific period of time in a practical setting. The student enters into a clinical placement once they have completed the required prerequisites.

JobStart/Future Skills (JS/FS) and Work-Based Training link training to employment. It is offered in partnership with Saskatchewan businesses, industry associations, individuals, public training institutions, and other training deliverers to provide recognized training and employment opportunities and provide employers with the skilled workers they need. Employers play a significant role in providing training to their employees. This includes: developing training activities, providing on-the-job trainers, and monitoring trainee progress. Training consultants assist the on-the-job trainers by providing "train the trainer" assistance. In addition, employers are provided with course materials, program manuals, and other training materials and program monitoring to ensure program and instructional quality and trainee progress. Credit towards a full certification credential is given for much of the training.

The JobStart/Future Skills program contains four options, two of which support on-the-job training:

- ***Work-based Training for the Unemployed*** provides financial assistance to employers to deliver recognized (by industry, a training institution, or government) on-the-job training that will lead to permanent employment for unemployed Saskatchewan residents. The training is targeted for new, full-time positions. The program provides up to 50% (dependent on the number of employees) of approved training costs for each trainee to a $5,000 maximum.

- ***Work-based Training for the Employed*** provides funding support to Saskatchewan employers in the manufacturing, processing, and agri-value sectors who need to retrain existing permanent employees in order to maintain or increase their competitive position. The program funds a portion of eligible training costs. The program will also provide retraining support to employers to retrain or upgrade the skills of employees facing permanent layoff or employees moving from part-time to permanent full-time employment. This option is not restricted to specific sectors and is open to all Saskatchewan employers. The program provides up to 33% of approved training costs for each trainee.

Some programs have a ***practicum*** component that involves mandatory, practical, on-the-job training as part of the course of study. Students are monitored and evaluated by instructors or preceptors based on established learning outcomes. Fifteen hours of practicum is equivalent to one credit unit.

The following Figure 10.1 compares the types of work experiences students within SIAST programs undergo.

Figure 10.1

Type of Work Experience	**Supervised by:**		**Evaluated by:**		**Average length**	**Credit**		**Approx # of students**
	Employer	**Faculty**	**Employer**	**Faculty**		**Yes**	**No**	
Co-op Ed	yes	yes	yes	yes	Approx. 12 wks	Yes		690
Internship	yes	-	-	-	N/A		no	Varies
JS/FS	yes	yes	yes	yes	10-20 wks	yes		1200
Work Experience	yes		yes		2 wks		no	N/A
Clinical Placement	yes	yes	yes	yes	Varies	yes		790
Practicum	yes	yes	yes	yes	Varies	yes		N/A

Source: Saskatchewan Learning - Summary of Work Experience in SIAST programs (Note: JS/FS is not all SIAST)

10.2 Philosophies and Approaches

In order to avert projected labour shortages in the trades and technology sectors, the training system and employers must work together to find practical solutions to ensure an ongoing supply of well-trained employees. The young Aboriginal population can provide Saskatchewan with a competitive advantage. The training system must compete to attract students and apprentices to stay in Saskatchewan to take their training and then to seek employment in Saskatchewan. In order to attract and keep an adequate workforce, the training system, in partnership with business and industry, must provide a wide variety of learner-centered program options. As well, the training system must work co-operatively with business and industry to ensure graduates have the technical and general jobs skills necessary to function at a high level in the workplace.

As Saskatchewan moves to a knowledge-based economy, there must be options for individuals and employers to continually retrain and upgrade. Lifelong learning undertaken by individuals and supported by employers is essential.

In order to acquire the skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to be fully employed within an occupation and to ensure well trained, highly skilled employees, training must include both theory and practice. On-the-job training provides this opportunity.

In order to maximize system effectiveness and to respect each individual's prior learning, the training system has implemented a program for RPL. This is an important tool for assessing capabilities and skill transferability for employment and training.

RPL recognizes both credentialed and experiential learning. Its purpose is to identify a person's abilities and skills and to match these with the requirements of a particular job, training program, workplace, and/or certification. RPL also identifies gaps in learning or in skills that need to be updated or improved, making it easier for employers and trainers to respond to specific needs and for workers to better adapt through continued learning. In this way, RPL can aid in reducing unnecessary training and in focusing on identified needs.

10.3 Employer Participation

According to the latest statistics, the majority of the individuals in the 2005 labour force are already employed; however, a large majority of these people will not meet the skill requirements for the 2015 labour market and will need training or retraining to sustain employment. On-the-job training in its many variations is highly dependent upon employer and industry support. Employers and industry provide an environment where new entrants to the labour force, learners in pre-service training programs, and experienced employees learn within the real world. On-the-job training is a partnership between and among businesses, industry associations, individuals, public training institutions, and other training deliverers. Employers provide paid and unpaid, short and longer-term, and supervised (by the training institution) and unsupervised (by the training institution) learning experiences for students within the training system.

Through distance education methodologies, workplace training has the potential to increase delivery of trades and technical programs. While delivery of theoretical concepts through distributed learning, including the use of on-line methodology, is feasible for many programs, the laboratory component of these programs is a challenge. The establishment of local pre-established/accredited workplaces and staff throughout the province could help to overcome this dilemma. This would involve preparing workplaces and employers to support training and would allow trainees to remain closer to their home communities.

Increased numbers of on-the-job training partnerships with business and industry could potentially expand training system capacity without large capital investments in facilities and equipment. These partnerships could provide student exposure to costly, cutting edge technology without significant investment and updating of equipment by the training system.

The Panel recommends:

72. **Support to businesses that provide on-the-job training be expanded, including: access to training materials, access to training experts, access to distance delivery options, and access to orientations for businesses (e.g., mentoring practices, student evaluation techniques, etc.).**

73. **Timely, user-friendly programs for on-the-job delivery - complete with reference materials and other resources compatible to workplace**

instruction be accessible to employers and trainees at times convenient to the workplace and to individual learners (i.e., asynchronous not synchronous delivery).

10.4 Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC)

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission is a centerpiece in Saskatchewan's strategy to increase the number of certified trades people in the province in order to meet the demand that is expected to increase significantly over the next few years. The pressures within the labour market generally are expected to be equally as pronounced for the certified trades. The curriculum, exams, testing, hours, and skills requirements are all determined by industry. The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission is industry-driven.

Apprenticeship is a structured system of supervised (usually one apprentice to one journeyperson) training leading to certification in a designated trade delivered through a combination of on-the-job training and classroom instruction. Apprenticeship involves a formal agreement between an individual who wants to learn a skill and an employer who needs a skilled worker. The formal apprenticeship agreement is registered with the SATCC and sets out the responsibilities and obligations of the employer and the apprentice, as well as the period of training.

Apprenticeship training ranges from two to five years, depending on the trade. Apprentices spend approximately 80% of their time working on the job learning the knowledge and skills of the trade from a certified journeyperson. On-the-job skill development is reinforced with theoretical and technical training, usually at SIAST.

The classroom component, which generally requires from eight to twelve weeks of training in each of four years, is centralized at a SIAST facility in the particular city (Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw or Prince Albert) where it is offered in any given year. The majority of apprentices thus have to move to the city where a course is offered. This is somewhat inconsistent with the NTM emphasis on flexibility, access, and learner centeredness.

Apprentices generally participate in one formal technical training course per year. The majority of these courses are offered through SIAST or contracted through private training providers, Aboriginal training institutions, the Regional Colleges, or other organizations. Some trades training takes place in other provinces. Guidelines for each level of apprenticeship have been established which identify the tasks to be covered by the apprentice during the on-the-job portion of the training. The number of hours of work is defined by the SATCC. Employers are required to maintain record books for each apprentice to document the training hours and type of work completed by the apprentice. Successful completion of an apprenticeship leads to a journeyperson certificate.

As well, the *Inter-provincial Standards (Red Seal) Program,* established to provide greater mobility for skilled workers across Canada, has been developed for each of the 45 Red Seal trades across Canada. It is used as a base document for the development of inter-provincial standard examinations and is encouraged to be used by the provinces and territories for curriculum development. With a Red Seal endorsement, an individual is automatically recognized (no exam required) in any province or territory that issues a journeyperson certificate for that trade.

The demand for apprentices drives the labour market planning process, and the SATCC attempts to anticipate the demand for (re)training and the type of training required. Discussions held with major employers and unions determine the potential number of apprentices requiring training.

The Construction Sector Council's national and provincial reports forecast moderate employment growth in Saskatchewan for most trades over the next few years (Construction Sector Council, 2005). Competition for Saskatchewan's qualified workers will increase due to strong construction growth in Western Canada and other sectors such as manufacturing. The reports do not provide a sub-provincial perspective, although trades shortages are already occurring in rural Saskatchewan. Sixty percent of total apprentices reside in rural and northern areas, and efforts to retain them will require work placements and responsive training opportunities.

Prior to beginning a pre-trades program SIAST must demonstrate employers' need for workers, involve employers in the selection of students, and ensure the program curriculum has a built-in work experience.

The situation in the certified trades could be more severe than for some of the other technical fields. Some of the reasons for this are associated with the current realities the apprenticeship program.

Some features of apprentice training worth noting include:

- the limited attention placed on these trades by K-12 schools, including a lack of career information and advice;
- the relatively low status that appears to be associated with work in the certified trades, notwithstanding the highly skilled nature of the work and the high wages for journeypersons in many of the trades;
- the fierce competition from Alberta and other provinces for apprentices and journeypersons;
- the requirements for people with different types of certification varies significantly, including in many large enterprises in the resources, processing, fabrication and construction sectors in the rural and northern areas as well as the urban areas, combined with the on-going demand for trades peoples' services in the rural and northern areas; tradespersons are needed to provide services required by homeowners, small businesses and farmers, as well as in virtually all

of the retail, repair, manufacturing, extraction, processing, construction and transportation sectors in the province;

- the need for most apprentices to take substantial amounts of classroom training at SIAST campuses for four years, requiring many to leave families and communities;
- the need to have employment with a sponsoring employer; and,
- the need for virtually all apprentices to train for a number of years under the direct supervision of a journeyperson who can have no more than one apprentice at any given time.

Since being formed in 1999, the SATCC has had some important successes. The Panel is of the view that a successful apprenticeship program will make a very important contribution to meeting the skills needs of the province in the future.

10.5 Analysis of the Performance of SATCC

One of the problems the SATCC faces is that some aspects of the program make expansion of capacity difficult, and other parts of the program are inherently inconsistent with important features of the NTM.

- ***Public Perception of the Trades***

The problems with expansion are of both a supply and demand nature. On the supply side, there is a problem getting people to pursue careers in the apprenticeable trades. The largest numbers of new apprentices are relatively young, although a growing number are mature adults. Young people generally are led to see the trades as a second, third, or even lower choice upon completion of high school. The trades are seen as the alternative for those who are not smart, not academically inclined, and not suited to professional occupations. This perception is informed by values and attitudes found in the home, school, workplace, media and the community.

The whole education system needs to rise to the challenge of representing the trades in a positive light, and making it known that some of the most challenging and interesting employment today can be found in the trades. People in the trades are well-placed to choose where and what hours they want to work. Trades work can be an excellent jumping-off point for starting a business or becoming a supervisor or manager.

The trades are, of course, not for everyone, but that makes trades training no different than any other educational option. The trades, however, are by no means a second or third occupational choice. For most people, they can be a very good first choice which will never be regretted. Measures must be taken to increase the numbers of people interested in the trades. The Panel has been told this time and time again. We have been told that this is needed across all of the vocational and technical occupations.

There is also a problem of access to employment to complete the work experience portion of apprentice training. In many cases, this seems to be a larger problem in rural areas than in the major cities.

- ***Employer Participation and Employment as an Apprentice***

The SATCC reports that the main capacity constraint is the reluctance of employers to take on registered apprentices. Employers say that the costs are higher and there is great uncertainty about recouping the apprenticeship costs because employees are highly mobile. The employer must take on considerable responsibility for supervision and training, with a significant cost in time. Seniority requirements in larger workplaces can also make employers reluctant to participate because they cannot choose who will fill an apprenticeable position.

A further complication is that in many smaller communities there are no journeypersons who could take on the supervisory role. Historically, rural businesses and many Aboriginal employers have not required documented qualifications. This practice has meant that businesses have not consistently hired journeypersons, and today they lack the staff (i.e., journeypersons) qualified to indenture and train apprentices.

Other employers indicated they cannot afford to hire new employees who do not already have the basic skills to work in their industry. It was also noted the current training system cannot produce enough journeypersons to meet the current demand because of capacity issues and trade time requirements.

Measures are needed to try to relieve the potential bottleneck arising from insufficient numbers of participating employers. The employer-based portion of the apprenticeship program is highly decentralized. Although on the one hand that is a great advantage, on the other hand it creates problems in assuring quality. Quality assurance and monitoring of the work-based training component was set out as a specific concern in the Final Report of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy, and still remains a concern.

The Panel also heard that the pay levels of apprentices, especially in non-unionized shops, are not the same as in unionized shops and that there are abuses in terms of pay. It has been reported there are system disincentives to becoming a journeyperson as some employers are unwilling to pay increased salary to individuals when they receive higher levels of certification.

- ***Diversity/Representative Workforce and RPL***

At its inception, the SATCC was instructed to develop plans and processes to increase access to trades so that the diversity of the provincial workforce would be reflected. As well the SATCC was to increase innovation and flexibility in program delivery.

Aboriginal participation in apprenticeable trades is a matter of great concern. Although the level of participation for Aboriginal apprentices at June 30, 2005, was 14.5%, the proportion of Aboriginal people who achieved journeyperson status for the corresponding timeframe was 3.2%. This low number of new Aboriginal journeypersons is partially due to the lag between instituting an intervention and completion of the program.

Almost without exception, the Panel has been told that the system and its component parts must place a priority on Aboriginal people acquiring training. This applies as much to the SATCC as to all of the institutions. This is not to suggest that the SATCC has not introduced measures to increase Aboriginal participation.

Since 2001/02, annual funding has been provided to the SATCC to implement initiatives to increase Aboriginal participation. Projects are funded by the Commission to advance this objective and an advisory council to review projects and provide direction has been established. In 2004/05, a number of projects received assistance for 119 Aboriginal apprentices and as well, between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004, 817 persons of Aboriginal ancestry were registered as apprentices meaning the proportion of those receiving assistance was 14.5%.

The Panel was told that that racism is widespread in some of the environments where Aboriginal apprentices/journeypersons work.

Another concern with respect to the apprentice system is the gender distribution of those registered. On June 30, 2004, there were 5,258 apprentices registered in the system. Of these 4,345 were male and 913 (14.3%) were female; however, only 257 (4.0%) of the females were in predominantly male occupations. The gender distribution is, of course, largely a result of the gender distribution of those working in the designated trades. However, it is a matter of concern that while training and post-secondary training has seen a dramatic change over the past twenty years toward gender balance, the same is not true with the apprenticeship program.

The Commission has made a commitment to RPL, and this seems to be having a measurable degree of success.

10.6 Moving Forward

In general, the apprenticeship system is relatively fixed in its structure and approach to training. The SATCC has a mixed record of innovation consistent with the NTM. There are doubts as to whether the current structure and general approach will be successful either in substantially increasing the number of trained tradespersons in the province, or in dramatically changing the diversity and inclusiveness of the journeyperson population. Unfortunately, the province does not have the luxury to let any part of the system lag behind, regardless of how difficult the challenge is.

- ***Job retention and completion of apprenticeships***

  In some trades, job retention and continued apprenticeship is described as problematic. It was suggested that if some entry level skills were provided prior to employment in all trades, individuals would have an opportunity to experience the type of work required prior to entering employment (it was noted that pre-employment and pre-trades training is currently available in many trades). Individuals who complete these programs can then become indentured as apprentices and would be eligible to receive apprenticeship credit for the pre-service technical training and hours worked.

- ***Innovation and Flexibility***

  Another issue raised with the Panel is the need for increasingly flexible programming which would meet the both the needs of business and industry and those of the individual apprentices. Innovative apprenticeship program initiatives provincially, nationally, and internationally have achieved varying levels of success. Not all have had the support required to be sustained or to be implemented across industry. Some examples of successful innovations include:

  - Construction Careers Regina, Construction Careers Saskatoon, and Construction Careers Prince Albert are apprenticeship programs in the construction trades aimed at engaging Aboriginal people. These programs provide access to employment, training, and trade certification and are a partnership involving industry, SIIT, SIAST, and the SATCC. Contrary to usual practice, but in compliance with regulations, these trainees are indentured as apprentices to the Construction Career Joint Training Committee once they gain employment rather than to a particular employer.

  - Development and delivery of apprenticeship training totally in the workplace (The Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council).

  - A day-release program where apprentices receive the 8 week theoretical classroom instruction one day per week while continuing to work full time for their employer (Saskatchewan cooking trade).

  - An on-line, competency-based program to teach the theory portion for Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

It was also noted that some apprentices experience significant financial hardship when they have to leave work for 8-10 weeks to attend classroom training at locations at a distance from their homes - even though they receive income support and pay minimal tuition fees. Currently, apprenticeship training is almost all delivered by SIAST or industry. This arrangement for apprenticeship training delivered within the training system is enshrined in the Training Protocol Agreement, July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2006, between the SATCC and SIAST. This Agreement gives SIAST the "first opportunity to deliver the apprenticeship technical training component of the apprenticeship system for trades identified" within the Agreement and that "SIAST will be given an opportunity to provide apprenticeship technical training in new trades through an open competitive approach." The Panel was told that delivery of the theory portion of apprenticeship training could be delivered in more locations if delivery options were expanded to include the Regional Colleges and Aboriginal institutions. As well, flexible options including Friday/Saturday classes and half day work – half day classes need to be further explored.

Although Campus Saskatchewan provides funding for development and delivery of technology enhanced programming, SATCC does not currently have any direct access to these funds. Conversion of current trades training to electronic formats must be done through SIAST (which is eligible for Campus Saskatchewan funding) or by industry (which is not eligible for Campus Saskatchewan funding). Direct access to Campus Saskatchewan funding would allow the SATCC to control the development of on-line courses and programs through contracts with SIAST or other program developers.

Some industries, notably oil and gas, told the Panel there is a need for additional trades and the related training.

The Panel is of the view that changes to the delivery of the apprenticeship program are needed for the objectives of the NTM to be met. The Panel thus believes that the first step in advancing the apprenticeship program is to refine and further develop the delivery model. Some of the features of the apprenticeship model already comply with the NTM (e.g., based on seamless lifelong learning, a partnership with industry); however, the delivery model must become wholly consistent with the NTM as described in Chapter 4. The apprenticeship delivery model must be increasingly: learner-centered, flexible, accessible, inclusive, and innovative be well-supported by technology take place within highly developed workplaces and be accountable for impacts and outcomes. There is significant work to be done. In the face of overpowering change within the workforce and the demands of the Saskatchewan labour market, action cannot be delayed.

The SATCC and industry are committed to the program as it is now structured. The introduction of a new delivery model must look at all of the relevant and important questions, some of which are quite fundamental. It is thus considered advisable that this be undertaken with the assistance of outside experts who would provide a mix of experience and knowledge of the Commission's work and expertise and independence.

The Panel recommends:

74. The SATCC and the Minister of Learning appoint a team to develop a plan to address the delivery model for the apprenticeship program and

that the resulting plan include:

- strategies to significantly increase the numbers of trades people with journeyperson status to meet labour market needs;

- improvements to ensure the needs of rural and northern Saskatchewan are met;

- measures to assure high quality in the work-based portion of the program;

- strategies to facilitate adequate employer participation to sustain the program;

- the principles of decentralization and flexibility as a central component of the formal learning portion of the program;

- strategies to increase the successful participation and completion of First Nations and Métis people;

- measures to address the gender imbalance within the trades; and

- an evaluation framework to determine the impact of the plan.

- The development team should include members of the senior management of the SATCC, industry, senior management of Saskatchewan Learning, and knowledgeable outside experts. The plan should be implemented by September 2006.

75. That alternative program strategies to increase the production of journeypersons and to support industry throughout the apprenticeship system be pursued, including:

    - development of new, alternative quality control mechanisms which enable those workplaces where highly skilled and experienced non-journeypersons are employed to apprentice entry level employees;

    - increasing the maximum number of apprentices per journeyperson for all trades;

    - taking action to ensure training related environments and trades do not tolerate racism and action to ensure students and apprentices have mechanisms to resolve issues related to racism;

    - delivering Level I apprenticeship theory training prior to employment for all trades, re-enforcing this training through

practical application in the workplace and offering these courses in urban, rural and northern communities;

- **ensuring delivery of Apprenticeship training is based on a local needs assessment;**
- **expanding the SATCC Training Protocol Agreement (or developing a new protocol) to include program development and delivery by Regional Colleges and by Aboriginal training institutions, as well as the purchase of out-of-province programs;**
- **expanding the number of trades programs to meet emerging needs particularly in the oil and gas sector;**
- **developing programs to "fast track" and recognize apprentices who demonstrate required skills in shorter (than currently identified requirements) time frames;**
- **providing funding for projects which are aimed at increasing the number of journeypersons, use Aboriginal faculty, and require follow-up evaluation to substantiate outcomes and impacts; and,**
- **providing a place for the SATCC on the Campus Saskatchewan Board so that it can access funding to facilitate development/purchase of on-line programs.**

76. **Local pre-established/accredited workplaces and staff be set up through on-the-job training partnerships to provide practical learning opportunities, particularly in rural and northern areas where there are inadequate lab facilities, where programs are not offered on an ongoing basis, or where the equipment changes rapidly be expanded.**

77. **Mobile laboratories and shops, in conjunction with local business, be developed to offer technical training for select high demand programs in changing localities.**

10.7 Special Challenges

In order to fully utilize potential workplace training, employers and trainees must be able to access a variety of suitable training materials which meet the learning needs of the individual trainees and the needs of employers. Support for training in the workplace enables employers to develop their workforce and develops a learning culture that fosters creativity and innovation and positions companies to participate in the global marketplace.

With exception of the JobStart/Future Skills program (Work Based Training for the Employed; Work-Based Training for the Unemployed), neither private nor public sector employers are paid to participate in ongoing on the job training.

The Panel heard from two groups of employers who are unsatisfied with the current unpaid on the job training.

Firstly, employers involved in the Apprenticeship system, asked the Panel to consider an Apprenticeship Tax Credit to help offset the expenses incurred by companies with indentured apprentices. The SATCC asked the Panel to support it in this request of the government to implement a tax credit system to be paid to participating employers. This is intended to encourage employers to take on apprentices by offsetting their costs. The Panel has no objections to providing financial support for work-based training. Indeed, the Panel is strongly supportive of work-based training as part of the NTM.
The Panel reviewed the tax credit proposal very carefully. It has found it difficult to support a large investment in a training program that appears to be constrained by a large number of factors other than costs to employers to supervise trainees. Success must be measured in terms of the number of successful trainees (those who complete their apprenticeships) and the diversity of the journeypersons. Indeed, in today's circumstances the former depends on the latter. In order for the tax credit to be successful, other changes will also be needed.

Secondly, health districts proposed payment by the training system for practicums particularly where the health facility provides a preceptor. Clinical training for health sciences students is an essential component of health sciences education. Clinical experiences are the settings in which students learn to apply their scientific and theoretical concepts of the healing process to real patients, in real settings, to integrate concepts within their professional practice, to work with others in a health care team, and to adopt professional standards for behaviour by observing and modeling others. Payment of fees by training institutions to health facilities would inappropriately require the transfer money from one type of publicly funded institution to another.

While work experience and training on the job is not new, training for the skills required in today's highly technical workplace is becoming too great a challenge for many employers without the assistance and supports from experts in the field. While some programs such as the JobStart/Future Skills Program provide many of these kinds of supports to eligible employers who apply to the program, the supports provided are highly dependant on the preparedness and the resources of the institution or organization providing recognition for the training. In many instances, this is limited to the training materials used in a classroom setting and program quality monitor visit/visits from a program specialist.

The Panel recommends:

78. **Co-operative education, internships and other work-based components of programs in all parts the training system be expanded (as appropriate).**

79. **Expanded work experience initiatives in K-12 schools be encouraged.**

11

Recognition of Rural and Northern Saskatchewan

Chapter 11: Recognition of Rural and Northern Saskatchewan

Education is recognized as a key component in ensuring that rural and northern communities are vibrant and sustainable and have the human and social capital to succeed in a knowledge economy.

11.1 Trends

Rural depopulation continues in Saskatchewan, and the province has the highest rural-urban population split in western Canada (35.7% rural[17] and 64.3% urban[18]). For instance, the number of people living in rural Saskatchewan declined by 3.6% during the 1996-2001 census periods, accounting for a loss of 13,162 people. The effects of a declining and aging population combined with out-migration to urban areas have been particularly acute for rural Saskatchewan. Northern Saskatchewan, on the other hand, has a small but growing population based on higher birth rates, a younger population, and a lower propensity to migrate to other locations.

These changes in demographics and the economy are impacting the rural and northern labour market. Agricultural employment has declined while northern Saskatchewan is experiencing increased economic activity in the resource-based sectors, public services, and infrastructure projects. Annual needs assessments indicate persistent difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled workers within rural and northern areas. These difficulties are impacted by factors such as wages, working conditions, and many people's desire to live in a more urbanized environment.

Educational levels in rural areas are generally lower than the educational levels in urban areas (Figure 11.1).

Education levels in the North, particularly in the smaller outlying communities, are well below the provincial average with almost half the residents having less than Grade 8. In the North the demand for basic education and literacy programs far exceeds available resources and the demand for skills programming remains high.

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[17] *2001 Census*, Statistics Canada. The rural population for 1981 to 2001 refers to persons living outside centers with a population of 1,000 AND outside areas with 400 persons per square kilometer.

[18] *2001 Census*, Statistics Canada. (2001 Census definitions for urban areas are a minimum population concentration of 1,000 and a population density of at least 400/km^2, based on previous census counts. All territory outside urban areas is considered rural and includes the north).

Figure 11.1

Saskatchewan Population, Aged 15+, Rural and Urban, by Highest Educational Attainment

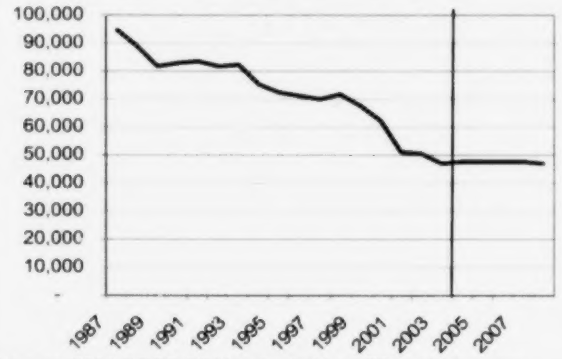
	Saskatchewan Urban	Saskatchewan Rural
Total Population	64%	36%
Less than high school certificate	57%	43%
High school certificate	66%	34%
Some post-secondary	72%	28%
Post-secondary certificate/diploma	67%	33%
University degree	80%	20%

Source: 2001 Census, custom tabulations, Statistics Canada

From 1994/95 to 2002/03, K-12 student enrolments declined by 22% in rural areas and increased by 2% in urban areas. It is anticipated that over time these trends will further impact the number of rural residents. In northern Saskatchewan, K-12 student enrolments in provincial schools decreased by 1.2% from 1994/95 to 2002/03. Enrolment in northern provincial schools is expected to remain stable, even though the non-Aboriginal youth population is declining. This is due to the growing Aboriginal youth population and their continued enrolment in provincial schools, albeit at a declining rate. Provincially, 82% of the 19,756 students living on-reserve attended First Nations-controlled schools in 2004/05, up from 74% in 1994/95. This trend is expected to continue (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005).

Figure 11.2

Actual and Forecast Employment in Agriculture in Saskatchewan, 1987-2008



Source: 2004 COPS CDM, adjusted by SED working group.

In 2003, agriculture employed 47,200 people across the province, a 43% drop from a decade earlier. Employment in this industry is expected to remain unchanged over the next five years, with a projected 0.1% average annual growth rate (Figure 11.2).

Over the past few years, the agricultural industry has been plagued by drought and adverse weather conditions, low prices, trade embargoes, closure of the U.S. border to Canadian beef, and international trade disputes. Subsidies in other parts of the world, especially in the United States, will continue to affect the ability of Saskatchewan's farmers to compete internationally. Farmers will continue to diversify into alternative crops, move into more value-added agri-business activities, and pursue off-farm employment in their local communities.

As rural and northern communities continue to adapt to economic realities and changing demographics, there will be significant demand for training and retraining. Newly acquired skills and abilities frequently provide the financial support to allow individuals and families to stay in their home communities.

11.2 Changing Conditions

Local industries are fast becoming a reality in rural Saskatchewan. These industries provide opportunities for trained people and in some cases are creating new occupations and the need for further training. Business and industry in rural areas urgently need trained employees and training will have to be enhanced and upgraded quickly. Accommodating training for local viable institutions is imperative.

Over the next few years, moderate employment growth in most of the trades has been predicted (Construction Sector Council, 2005). In western Canada, growth in construction and other sectors such as processing and manufacturing will create competition for qualified workers. So too will retirements.

The most severe shortages of trades workers are expected in rural and northern Saskatchewan. This point has been made repeatedly in submissions and has also been highlighted in the reports from the province's Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE). The cities will not be as severely affected as more trades people and skilled workers choose to live in the major centers.

Trades shortages are already occurring in rural Saskatchewan. Sixty per cent of total apprentices reside in rural and northern areas, and concerted efforts will need to be made to recruit, train, and retain them. Family and job responsibilities, lack of financial means, distance, and loyalty to the community mean that many rural and northern people are not able to leave their local community to attend training, especially prolonged training.

Rural depopulation has impacted the ability of rural and northern communities to attract teachers for the K-12 system. Northern school districts in particular have more difficulty recruiting specialized teachers because of competing demand for these hard-to-fill positions from other parts of the province. The Panel was told repeatedly that mathematics and science education within the high schools is not adequate to prepare graduates to succeed within the post-secondary system.

Distance from a post-secondary institution influences rural and northern participation. Research shows that individuals living beyond a commuting distance from a university, especially those from lower and middle income backgrounds, were much more likely to attend an institution close to home such as a regional college. Similarly, those living beyond a commuting distance to a regional college were less likely to pursue post-secondary education. Other barriers for rural and northern citizens include: lower parental education, lower expectations and awareness, a reluctance to move to an urban area, and a reluctance to incur debt.

In contrast to the identified barriers to post-secondary education, there are also economic factors which draw potential learners into employment. This is particularly true for areas where there is a strong economy and individuals can enter the labour market directly without completing post-secondary training (or in some cases without completing high school). Two examples where this occurs within Saskatchewan are the oil patch and the mining industry.

As mentioned earlier, education levels in the North, particularly in the smaller outlying communities, are well below the provincial average with almost half the residents having less than Grade 8. This has resulted in a huge demand for basic education and literacy programs. The demand far exceeds available resources. The demand for skills programming remains high although many individuals must complete ABE programs just to become eligible to apply for skills training. In the North there is a high demand for skilled workers in the mining, forestry, and tourism industries.

Advances in technology have created the potential to significantly enhance accessibility to post-secondary education and training. The use of technology allows for a more flexible approach to learning, including the ability to bridge the limitations of geography and time. CommunityNet and SCN provide expanded access to post-secondary programs through e-learning and distance delivery.

Of considerable importance in thinking about the needs of rural Saskatchewan are the reports of ACRE. After a great deal of study and consultation, ACRE released its final report in June 2005.

ACRE recommended:

- a program be put in place to allow school students to start as paid apprentices;
- the apprenticeship program and technical training programs be expanded with more funding;
- post-secondary programs be more flexible, including new delivery options in small communities;
- improved career counselling be implemented in the schools;
- increases in rural ABE and support for students;
- more support for Aboriginal people to participate in training; and,
- immigrants should receive more help and assistance.

The Panel found the work of ACRE provided valuable insights into the review, and is in agreement with most of the ACRE findings pertaining to the training system.

11.3 Regional Colleges

The formation of the community colleges in the 1970s was the province's first systematic attempt to address community-based delivery of adult education with an explicit concern about decentralization as a means of serving a widely dispersed population. The intention was that the community colleges serve more general community education needs not tied to employment, educational upgrading and demands for pre-employment training focusing on adults not able readily to participate in centrally delivered programs on fixed schedules. The focus was not solely on rural areas, but in many respects the development of the system was motivated by a concern about how to serve the continuous learning needs of the rural population.

In the early days of the community colleges, there was an emphasis on the delivery of leisure and hobby-oriented courses and on adult basic education. The colleges became very adept at providing a wide range of course offerings of a noncredit nature on relatively small budgets provided to them by the government. In most cases, the colleges offset a considerable part of the costs of these courses by charging fees. Adult Basic Education occupied a considerable amount of program time at the colleges, serving adult learners who had not completed school during the normal school leaving years. The federal government financed a substantial part of the costs of these programs through seat purchases and payments of living allowances to students.

From the beginning, the community colleges took the lead in support of the decentralized delivery of credit programming. Through time, offerings of SIAST and university credit courses were expanded through collaborative efforts in which the colleges identified needs and provided facilities and organizational support. A number of successful efforts were implemented to expand credit course offerings into full programs leading to certificates, diplomas and even degrees.

In setting up the regional college system, the planners were very cognizant of the challenges inherent in offering certificates and diploma courses in rural community settings. Quality and costs concerns were widely viewed as making it difficult to offer substantial amounts of employment related training outside the urban centers where facilities were already located. The solution was the brokerage model, according to which the community colleges could identify demands and needs, and provide logistical support to course offerings amenable to off-campus delivery. Any courses offered were required to meet the requirements of the SIAST facility-based programs. Standardization was of foremost concern in deciding whether a course could be offered in a rural community. Compromises were seen as potential erosion in program quality and therefore a threat to the program's credibility. Control over decisions about such offerings, including terms and conditions, was firmly placed in the hands of SIAST's faculty and management. There was some recognition the established facilities might have some self interest in maintaining the status quo, but in general self interest was viewed as simply being supportive of a centralized approach to programming and was viewed as desirable on the basis of both quality and delivery costs.

In 1988, the role of the community colleges was subsumed by SIAST in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw, and community colleges were converted to Regional Colleges throughout the rural areas of the province. The mandate of the Regional Colleges emphasized training for employment. The brokerage model continued, with SIAST continuing to have an essential monopoly on the development and delivery of credit courses. This model continues to apply to all credit programs today.

In the 30 years that the Regional Colleges and their predecessors, the community colleges, have been in existence, they have made a remarkable contribution to the province, particularly in the rural areas. They have provided leadership with respect to decentralized and learner-centered adult education and training. Saskatchewan is recognized as a leader in decentralized education that focuses on community-based access and delivery, and a good deal of the credit for this goes to the colleges.

The eight Regional Colleges are the face of the training system in rural and northern Saskatchewan and, as such, are vital to the social and economic future of the province. Rural colleges form a fundamental component of the rural and northern community infrastructure and have a role to play as catalysts for community development and renewal.

The Panel heard from many presenters (employers, local business groups, local governments, and Aboriginal groups) that Regional Colleges are flexible, professional, and accommodating. Regional Colleges are widely recognized as being able to develop and provide quality industry training programs quickly and effectively. Their quick response to industry need provides the kind of support required for rapidly developing businesses. Courses are offered in many small communities throughout each college's area and in some cases on First Nations' reserves.

Each regional college has an independent board and its own unique economic, social, and demographic challenges. Saskatchewan's Regional Colleges tend to be located in larger regional centers, but serve vast and sparsely populated geographic catchment areas. Regional Colleges provide credit technical and trades training (certificate, diploma) and university programs (degree), cost-recovery training, career services, adult basic education, and noncredit programs, including business, industry (may receive industry credit) and community education programs in locations outside the four large urban centers across the province. Technical credit training and university courses are delivered through brokerage arrangements with other credit granting institutions within or outside of the province.

Being responsive to the needs of learners, employers and communities is central to the Regional Colleges' business and operations, and annual Regional Needs Assessments (RNAs) are undertaken to help target markets, plan programs, set priorities and allocate resources. The RNA reports provide a regional overview of education, training and labour market needs and often include an occupational, industry or community/ subregional perspective.

Through its participation on the long-standing Northern Labour Market Committee (NLMC) with its 11 subcommittees and over 80 representatives from employers, industry, communities, Aboriginal organizations, training providers, funding agencies and all levels of government, Northlands College has the most coordinated and integrated regional planning process. The annual RNA report is collaboratively developed by Northlands College, NLMC and the department's Northern Region Office and provides an in-depth assessment of identified labour market, education, and training needs in the region.

However, as mentioned earlier, overall coordination and collation of the training system needs assessment reports at a provincial level does not occur and this is problematic.

Collectively, the Regional Colleges served over 20,000 learners in 2003/04, with 3,000 students in ABE, 700 students in university education and the remaining 16,700 students enrolled in credit and noncredit skills training. For skills training, almost half (47%) of the students were enrolled in industry credit skills programming and over a third (37%) were enrolled in noncredit programming that included industry, community and personal interest programs. Only 16% of students were enrolled in institute credit skills training programs brokered by SIAST and other training providers. In terms of course load measured by Full-Load Equivalency (FLE), 48% of FLE students were enrolled in institute credit skills training and 35% enrolled in industry credit skills training. Examining student enrolments in skills training by total participant hours shows greater emphasis on institute credit (78%) and less on industry credit (15%) and noncredit programming (7%).

Regional Colleges provide much needed vocational and career counselling to individuals seeking to start or change careers. They also provide assistance to individuals seeking access to PLAR and are able to counsel these individuals regarding further training or upgrading. Many Regional Colleges actively liaise with local and regional high schools and First Nations high schools to recruit students and to provide career-related information.

The Panel was told that coordination and collaboration between colleges is limited (e.g., waiting lists and curricula not usually shared, there is competition for students, etc.) and it is most frequently project-based.

Through the Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges (ARSC), colleges collaborate on issues of common interest, including advocacy, provincial marketing, business development, and governor development.

11.4 Issues and Opportunities

Because of the economic situation in agriculture, a substantial number of farmers are seeking alternative sources of income either by diversifying into new markets or by acquiring off-farm employment. Although these circumstances require support including additional training/upgrading, many rural people have significant ties to their local communities and are not able to relocate.

Training opportunities which focus on the province's natural resources will enhance Saskatchewan's competitive advantage. As well, training opportunities which support the value-added diversification of agriculture benefit both rural and urban residents.

Demographics – The widely dispersed rural population serves to compound the provincial demographic trends of an aging population with increasing numbers of retirees. The young Aboriginal population in the North will potentially provide a strong labour force so the province can capitalize on opportunities in the forestry and mining industries.

Youth in both the rural areas and the North must gain the required literacy and essential skills within the K-12 system and schools must provide effective, comprehensive career counselling. The availability of skills training offered locally will enhance opportunities for people to obtain and maintain the employment skills necessary for sustainable employment in their home communities.

College regions - The current model for the Regional Colleges is grounded in service tailored specifically to learners and employers within the local area. *The Regional Colleges Act* provides the Minister of Learning the authority to establish regions as geographic areas of Saskatchewan in which a regional college is to provide services. College regions are unique and do not correspond to or align with other provincial regions (e.g., K-12 school divisions, economic regions, or health regions). College regions vary in size of catchment areas.

College mandate - The Regional Colleges were created by *The Regional Colleges Act, 1991*. This Act and its related regulations describe the mandate and operations of the colleges.

Many colleges offer classes which may fall outside the mandate stated within the Act. These classes, categorized as Personal Enhancement, include exercise classes, classes for children, and personal interest/leisure classes (Feng Shui, photography, etc.). The last Regional Colleges review indicated that in instances where a community need for personal interest or leisure programs can not be met by another agency, Regional Colleges have the ability to provide this type of programming on a full-cost recovery basis including both direct and indirect costs. Based on the current and developing demand on the colleges for ABE and skills training, it may be that this function should be eliminated or be handled in a new way.

Brokerage Model – Historically, the brokerage model was adopted as a way of providing voice and opportunity for rural communities to obtain access to training without replicating capacity that already existed at the provincial technical institutes. It was recognized that the ability to develop and offer certificate and diploma programs of a high quality, recognized by employers, did not exist in smaller communities which did not have the facilities, staff and instructors.

Currently, the Regional Colleges contract (broker) credit programs from other post-secondary institutions. As credit-granting institutions, the universities and technical institutes develop, deliver, and maintain credit programs, while the colleges are the delivery vehicle in rural and northern areas. Colleges determine local need and based on the identified need make the arrangements with the credit granting institutions for delivery of the required training.

Within the regional college regulations the definition of institute is "Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology or any other institute designated by the Minister." Many presenters identified that this regulation means the Regional Colleges must go to SIAST first to broker credit training programs and only when SIAST is unable to provide the training can the colleges look to other sources (in the province or out of province). Concern was expressed that this near monopoly minimizes the ability of colleges to select credit training based on merit (cost effectiveness, quality, learner friendliness, etc.). As well, this interpretation of the regulations does not give appropriate recognition to the SIIT, the other credit granting technical training institution within the province. In the event that a specific program is not available, colleges may develop programs; however, the resulting curriculum is subject to the SIAST program approval process as well as be approved by the department.

Use of a provincial brokerage model for credit training was originally instituted to maximize effectiveness and efficiency within the training system by limiting the need for duplication of the academic infrastructure required to develop and maintain program curriculum and by 'branding' the credential to ensure graduates are recognized provincially, nationally and internationally.

Interaction between SIAST and the colleges - In order for the provincial training system to function effectively within rural and northern areas the roles and interactions of both SIAST and the Regional Colleges must be clearly delineated. Currently, SIAST, as the granter of the credit, is responsible to make credit training available throughout the province through both direct program delivery and through the delivery structure of the Regional Colleges. Brokering programs to the Regional Colleges is an integral part of SIAST's extension activity.

SIAST's funding from government is intended to include resources for the development and maintenance of the academic infrastructure necessary to develop and maintain curriculum and the curriculum supports for credit training. Institute credit training (certificate/diploma) is offered by Regional Colleges through a brokerage agreement with SIAST. The agreement requires that colleges reimburse SIAST for direct (e.g., salaries, student and instructor materials, incremental costs for registration, etc.) expenditures as well as indirect expenditures (e.g., administrative fee of 5%, library charges, etc.) and may, depending on the program, also be assessed market and risk management factors.

In 2004/05, SIAST's gross revenue from credit training contracts with the Regional Colleges totalled almost $3 million. Presenters identified that this transfer of funds between SIAST and the colleges is unnecessary and acts as a detractor to the smooth functioning of the training system. It was also suggested that if there was increased funding to SIAST, provincial curricula could be developed and maintained at no charge to the institutions within the public training system. As well, it may be more appropriate to fund SIAST so that overhead and administrative costs are not required from colleges. This would have the added benefit of having consistent student tuitions for the same programs. Colleges would still require funding to deliver noncredit courses/programs, as well as, credit programs from other institutions where the material is either not available within the province or where a program from another recognized institution is deemed to better meet student/learner needs.

Coordination between colleges – Each college was set up to be an independent entity yet as part of the training structure. Currently, coordination occurs through a variety of committees including those which involve Senior Academic Officers, Senior Business Officers and the Chief Executive Officers. However, increased coordination among and between colleges would likely benefit individuals who are trying to access both credit and noncredit training. Suggested examples of where learners could benefit from increased coordination among and between colleges include sharing waitlists for programs; sharing noncredit curricula at no cost, and having a single provincial website where potential students could access a list outlining all credit and noncredit training offered throughout the colleges.

Across the province there are industries and businesses which require training but where the number of students in any one area is insufficient to warrant a class. Public awareness of training options paired with innovative delivery strategies could make necessary training available to learners in multiple college regions (e.g., needs of manufacturers).

Distance delivery of programs – The role of technology in the delivery of training programs is still being explored and developed. Technology has the potential to increase opportunities for learners in locations where they are too distant to travel daily to training programs.

Through enhanced collaboration in providing access to e-learning opportunities, there is less need for each institution to develop and deliver similar programs. However, not all learners are able to use technology and not all programs are amenable to e-learning environments. As well, delivery of technology enhanced learning frequently places additional pressures on institutions due to the need to provide both learner support and technology support.

Funding to colleges – The proportion of provincial post-secondary funding which goes to Regional Colleges and the budget requirements which surround this funding was the subject of much concern as the Panel met with people in the rural areas. Funding to Regional Colleges must be increased. Current funding levels are insufficient to meet the training demanded from the regional college system. The Panel was told that "strings" attached to college funding must be eliminated to enable them to deal effectively with local training needs. Accountability for the use of public funds would be better served by the introduction of a performance measures set which is specific to each college; defines outcomes, impacts and targets; and is negotiated between the individual colleges and government. The Panel was told repeatedly that increased flexibility within the budget process would facilitate the colleges' ability to address regional priorities. The Panel was also told that longer term budget commitments from government would facilitate more strategic forward planning and result in greater efficiency within the regional college system.

Capital funding – Facilities for the Regional Colleges vary significantly by college. In particular, Northlands College needs facilities upgraded and expanded to meet the needs of learners in the North.

As well, several presenters identified the urgent need for housing facilities for Aboriginal students who are attending post-secondary training programs especially, in Prince Albert, Meadow Lake and La Ronge.

11.5 Analysis and Performance of the Regional Colleges

The Regional Colleges continue to this day to respond to the needs and challenges of rural communities with new strategies and innovative approaches. Some of the more important of these include:

- ***Strengthening capacity in support of community and economic development***

  The Panel has spoken with many of the clients and groups who work with the colleges on a variety of projects. Based on these discussions, it is obvious that the colleges have become a central part of the networks in the rural areas committed to various community development initiatives. These networks constitute an important part of the social capital of these areas. This social capital is arguably one of the most important resources in support of development in a modern rural society. The rural areas of the province have gone through challenging and difficult times over the last two decades with a troubled farm economy, a sharp reduction in farm numbers and a declining rural population. Of perhaps greater significance, however, is a vigorous new commitment to development and renewal in rural communities.

  Local and regional organizations throughout the province are working together to develop and implement strategies to support diversification and to attract new investment and people to the communities. The Panel has been struck by the importance that virtually all parties place on the role of the colleges in the future development of the communities. The colleges are recognized as having the skills and people to contribute to needs assessments and strategic planning, to mobilize action and to position communities as attractive places to work and live. They are also seen as critical to meeting the needs of new and existing enterprises for the skilled workforce needed by successful enterprises. In most cases, community stakeholders, employers, and the colleges themselves have stated the belief that their role could be strengthened by more explicit support by Saskatchewan Learning and other government departments for a mandated responsibility for Regional Colleges in community and regional economic development.

  A related, but slightly different issue relates to entrepreneurial development and training. As the population of rural Saskatchewan ages, there are areas where the population is also becoming smaller. Most communities are placing a premium on co-operation, at the local and regional level. There are a number of agencies and institutions working in support of co-operation and cooperative development, which is a real asset in the rural communities.

At the same time, a substantial part of the economy will be dependent on individual, small, local enterprises. This is true for, but not limited to the agricultural, tourism, retail, transportation, professional, and trades sectors. The owners and operators of existing enterprises are aging and many will retire over the next few years. Successor enterprises and new start-ups will be required. These will most often be owned and operated by local people, including local young people who stay or return to their home communities.

The management of small business enterprises has itself become a complex and challenging undertaking. A good deal of what is needed to be successful has to be encouraged and learned. The Panel has found that there is a broadly recognized need for various forms of training and education related to entrepreneurial activity extending from a basic understanding of the value of such activity through to concrete business operating practices.

All training programs should make provision for some elements of such training. For instance, trades people working in the rural areas and the North will very often be self-employed. Trades training needs to include an introduction to basic business practices. So too do most other kinds of pre-employment training. However, it is even more important that flexible, practical programs based on continuous learning principles, including flexible modules that are recognized for purposes of further learning, be available in communities.

The Regional Colleges are uniquely positioned to take up the challenge of filling this need. This is a business area for them deserving of recognition and support. The Panel does not favour designating a specific grant to do this. However, some expansion of the overall operating grant to colleges in support of such training and education is justified.

The Panel recommends:

80. **Regional Colleges make the support of regional economic development a priority.**

81. **Government, particularly those departments with mandates related to regional economic development, support maximum involvement of the regional college in all phases of planning and implementation of rural strategies.**

- ***Supporting and providing industry based training***

Industry-based training refers generally to training courses and programs that are organized and delivered in association with employers, and which do not directly form part of the system of degrees, diplomas and certificates granted by the public system. The courses provided are thus "not for credit" in the sense that they are not equivalent to courses offered by SIAST or the universities, and do not require the authorization or approval of those institutions. In most cases, the courses are of relatively short duration, are geared to very specific skills and competencies associated with work in a particular industry, and are based on curricula and course content developed for or within the industry or an industry organization. Industry based training is not new. As these types or courses evolve and develop, they are expected to redefine the colleges in a significant way. They will establish a new and important role for the colleges in the business and economic development of the regions.

There are many examples of such courses and programs, some new and some not so new. These include:

- The Certified Management Accountancy (CMA) profession has long had its own requirements, including courses that must be taken to obtain certification. Under one track toward the CMA, public institutions act as brokers in offering required courses.

- The Canadian Welding Bureau has a program of certification. It is certified by the Canadian Standards Council. The certification of welding operations to their requirements is mandated by the National Building Code of Canada, Provincial Building Codes, over thirty other CSA Standards, and many customer specifications. It is also recognized by the American Welding Society.

- Another set of examples of industry certified courses come from the computer and technology industries. The CompTIA Network+ certification is an international industry credential that validates the knowledge of networking professionals with at least nine months of experience in network support or administration or academic training. It is vendor neutral, and is recognized across the industry, including by such companies as Microsoft, Novell, Cisco, Compaq, Lotus, and 3Com.

- Other widely used industry-certified programs come from the petroleum industry. The Petroleum Industry Training Service (PITS) is recognized internationally for consistently high quality training. PITS offers a wide variety of courses, self-study programs, publications, consulting, customized training, and other services related to petroleum technology, safety, environment, and career development.

The PITS mandate, as established by the Canadian petroleum industry, is to identify training needs, develop and offer training, provide advice and guidance and help establish standards.

PITS is owned, directed, and partially funded by six petroleum organizations. Courses offered for contract delivery include, Well Head Boom Truck Operator, Detection and Control of Flammable Substances, Light Duty Vehicles - Driver Improvement, H_2S Alive, Oilfield Swampers Course, General Oilfield Driver Improvement (GODI), Oilfield Haulers Course, Chainsaw Safety Training, Fall Protection for Rig Workers, and Fall Rescue for Rig Work. Many other safety and operating courses are offered.

- The Petroleum Competency Program (PCP) establishes an industry standard for field occupations in the petroleum industry. Formation of the PCP was initiated by the Petroleum Services Association of Canada (PSAC) and taken over in 2003 by the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada, a national collaborative forum that addresses human resources within the upstream petroleum industry.

  A Petroleum Services Board (PCB) establishes and monitors procedures for assessment and the competency process. The PCB is comprised of representatives from companies in each sector that currently have competency standards, or that have competency standards under development. Competency standards are developed for specific occupations by teams of expertise from those industry sectors. Currently, there are established competency standards for occupations in oil and gas transportation services and well testing services. Additional occupations are under review for the snubbing occupation.

Some of the benefits attributed to the industry credit programs include: for customers - reduced insurance costs from the use of qualified service personnel, cost effectiveness from the use of established correct practices and enhanced professional image; and for companies - improved training, assessment and quality of personnel, reduced administrative costs, training planned to more effectively meet future company needs, fewer accidents and incidents translating into lower costs and overhead and demonstrated due diligence; and for employees - the ability to make long-term learning and career plans, better remuneration and improved promotion opportunities.

There are many examples of industry-certified training offered in Saskatchewan today. Regional Colleges have developed capacity to respond to demands for such training, usually on a full cost recovery basis. This has become a substantial and growing line of business for many colleges.

The Panel recommends:

82. Industry credit programs, acknowledged and fully recognized in the application of PLAR, be recognized as a priority programming area for the Regional Colleges and DTI.

83. Partnerships and consortiums be encouraged among Regional Colleges and industry groups to more effectively provide industry training.

84. Virtual institutes within the Regional Colleges, in association with industry partners, be encouraged as a means of profiling, marketing and concentrating effort on specific sectors.

- ***Brokerage System***

As has already been referenced, the primary mechanism through which courses are recognized by the training system for credit towards a SIAST certificate or diploma has been to require these courses to be offered under the auspices of SIAST. These are commonly referred to as credit courses.

We were told that the largest issue respecting credit courses involves the brokerage model and the consequent relationship between SIAST and the Regional Colleges. A similar issue arises in the relationship between SIAST and DTI.

There are numerous professional bodies in the province that provide licenses to practice in a profession or an occupation, and that require a particular degree or diploma as part of the licensing requirement. These professional bodies establish the qualifications to practice in their licensed profession or occupation and in some cases prescribe content and time requirements of the courses and experiences included in the program. In many cases, there are also provincial and national bodies that accredit certificate and diploma programs based on pre-existing standards. Where program accreditation is a prerequisite for graduates to obtain licenses to practice within the profession, accrediting bodies regularly evaluate the curriculum, student experiences, and program outcomes and impacts. Based on the evaluation results, accreditation is either granted, granted with conditions, or is denied. Program accreditation is not a certainty and the consequences when programs lose accreditation status are significant to the student/graduate, the training system and employers.

If courses are to be financed by the public training system, the general expectation is that courses offered will either be credit or noncredit. Credit courses are expected to be recognized and of sufficient quality to be recognized for the purposes of a certificate, diploma or degree. The quality of the courses, it has been argued, as it applies to delivery by the Regional Colleges, has been maintained through standardized curricula, standardized instructional practice, instructor qualification standards and standards related to facilities and equipment.

Currently, the only public training institutions in Saskatchewan legislated to confer certificates and diplomas are SIAST and SIIT. This fact is fundamental to the brokerage function of the Regional Colleges and DTI since these latter institutions, by virtue of the fact that they do not have the authority to offer certificates and diplomas, cannot develop and offer courses independently of SIAST with any assurance that they will be recognized as providing credit toward a certificate or diploma. If the courses are to count toward a certificate or diploma, they must be recognized and accepted by SIAST or one of the other institutions offering diplomas or certificates.

The brokerage model is still a good basic model for credit courses. It provides a provincial standard for courses delivered by numerous colleges and institutes with differing capacities and competencies, and distributed widely over a large geographic area. However, much has changed since the brokerage model was developed in the 1970s. New training models have developed and have proved successful based on modularization, decentralization, technology, PLAR, improved regional assets, more experienced colleges with quality professional staff, and a more widely distributed pool educated group of people with the potential to teach training courses; are all now part of the modern reality. Student-centered learning, flexibility, independent learning, and continuous learning have now become fully integrated into teaching and learning.

The brokerage model as currently structured is a control model which puts virtually all the power and control into the hands of SIAST. The Panel has already discussed this issue in part in terms of the SIAST monopoly to confer certificates and diplomas. The system of credit course delivery in the province has become more complex and sophisticated over the years. The Regional Colleges and DTI have developed a much greater capacity to offer quality training.

The process of recognizing courses for credit is in need of modernization. However, it is not the intention of the Panel to totally end the brokerage system as it applies to the Regional Colleges and DTI. Rather, the Panel wants to see the regulatory process used by SIAST adapted to current realities. In part this is why the Panel has already recommended that the SIAST monopoly on certificate programs come to an end. It also believes that the colleges and DTI will still want to continue courses and program offerings under the brokerage model. This will clearly be true for diploma courses and can be expected to be true of many certificate programs.

The Panel proposes that colleges be empowered to confer certificates under their own authority. It also proposes that the colleges be able to continue to offer courses leading to SIAST certificates and diplomas, but that SIAST's proprietary control over course content be modified so that it does not apply to Regional Colleges, DTI or SIIT. Colleges and DTI would be free to adopt courses developed by SIAST at no charge, unless they purchase the actual instructional materials.

Additionally, the Panel proposes that the system of regulation that has prevailed under the brokerage system be fundamentally altered. Colleges should be entrusted to offer

SIAST credit courses and programs according to the quality standards set down by SIAST. They should be entrusted to make adaptations to learner and local needs based on professional judgments made by the colleges. The detailed and costly monitoring undertaken by SIAST should cease. The model of regulation should become one primarily of self-regulation, with recognition of the colleges as mature, professionally managed learning institutions within the provincial public learning system. The Regional Colleges, DTI and SIIT should be treated as equal partners, not subordinates of SIAST. It is time that they receive recognition as mature partners with SIAST in a common enterprise. Concerns regarding program and teaching learning quality should be mediated through the Council which is proposed in Chapter 6.

The Panel recommends:

85. The system of regulation that has prevailed under the brokerage system be fundamentally altered to one of self-regulation, with a recognition of the Regional Colleges and DTI as equal partners in the public training system, including:

- **courses and programs offered by Regional Colleges and DTI according to the quality standards set down by SIAST be recognized for credit by SIAST;**
- **disputes between Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIAST related to program and/or delivery quality or process be subject to mediation by the Council proposed in Chapter 6;**
- **Regional Colleges and DTI be entrusted to make adaptations to SIAST curricula, in response to learner and local needs, based on professional judgments made by them; and,**
- **SIAST's monitoring of SIAST-credit courses and programs offered by the Regional Colleges and DTI be discontinued and replaced by a self-monitoring process.**

86. SIAST curricula be available to all public training institutions (Regional Colleges and DTI) at no charge and that a reciprocal agreement for sharing of curricula be discussed with SIIT.

11.6 The New Training Model and Further Decentralization of the Delivery of Training Programs

The Regional Colleges system is the lynchpin to successful decentralization. Decentralization was a critical concept underlying the creation of the colleges in 1973. The colleges have a well-developed set of processes for identifying training demands in the regions and for planning training offerings. They have developed a great deal of experience in new and innovative means of delivery on a decentralized basis, including the use of technology, and for drawing upon the expertise and capacity of the central facility based institutions to support training. There is now a substantial infrastructure in place to support delivery of courses in the rural and northern areas, most of it developed by and through the colleges. It has been recognized within the Saskatchewan training system for quite some time that a decentralized system is needed if training is to reach rural citizens. The rapidly changing character of training and of training needs accentuates the need for an even greater emphasis on decentralization. The complexity and the ever changing nature of work, and people's lives in relation to work, has made it even more important that training be done as much as possible close to where people live and work. Learner centered, continuous, and flexible training are all very difficult to realize with conventional models based on fixed term, lock-step, pre-employment training.

The development of the college system involved tremendous foresight. It anticipated the radical changes that were coming in the nature and character of learners and their needs. The vision recognized that the traditional approach to training would become more and more inconsistent with the realities of the lives of learners. The need for learner centered, flexible, continuous learning was foreseen. So, too, was the idea that technology and capacity would develop and would facilitate decentralized community, home, and work-based training.

Today the Regional Colleges are well positioned to provide training in accordance with the NTM. A number of the government programs introduced over the past decade have provided important support in this. However, further innovation is still possible. Decentralization is a useful means of framing further extensions of the learner-centered model.

The Panel believes that through the use of technology and various forms of individualization of learning approaches, the provision of training can be further decentralized to smaller communities, workplaces, and homes. The Regional Colleges and DTI are uniquely equipped to further the possibilities for reaching the population in need of training and support in developing skills for the modern economy.

The Panel does not hold to the view that new institutional structures are needed to advance the NTM. However, it is useful to consider and develop ways that assist in organizing and concentrating effort on continuing innovation. In this respect, the Panel considers that a new kind of center is worthy of consideration under the auspices of the Regional Colleges. These are centers without rooms and walls that encourage the organizing and concentrating of effort around situations and opportunities where training can play a role in advancing individual, community or regional development. Such centers, to be affordable and adaptable, must be "virtual centers" that exist in cyberspace as opposed to physical space.

Examples could be an Energy Skills Center such as has been discussed for the west central region. Another could be a Forestry Center for the North. Alternately, a smaller community not having a regional college satellite facility could be served by a system of technology-provided courses that are specifically suited to that community's needs.

The virtual center would function as an information, marketing, and organizing mechanism for the community. Support would be provided by the regional college, not in the form of facilities or instructors in conventional classes, but in the form of electronic and telephone advice and assistance, and in accessing appropriate learning support (internet based courses, internet and video materials, remote mentors and training advisers, etc.). In order to be eligible to become a Virtual Community Skills Center, a community would have to have access to high speed internet, reasonable access by community members to up-to-date computers, a volunteer board or committee, and a volunteer or community-supported part-time coordinator. A community meeting these requirements would be eligible to be designated as a Virtual Community Skills Center.

The Panel recommends:

87. **Leadership be provided by Saskatchewan Learning to support pilot projects and innovative plans which further develop and operationalize the concepts in the NTM.**

88. **A Task Group be established to develop a model for sector and small community-based Virtual Community Skills Centers (VCSCs) to support increased access and participation to training programs, support for economic development, and further decentralization. This model would include:**

    - **designation of the Regional Colleges as the primary agents for implementation and support to the VCSCs; and,**

    - **terms of reference outlining the VCSC's role and mandate in supporting regional economic development and associated training needs.**

- ***Regional College Operating Areas and Integration with the K-12 School System***

Two questions arise with respect to regional college operating areas and boundaries.

The first is whether there should be any changes made in the boundaries of the college regions. The reasons for this could be either because there are too many colleges to realize full administrative efficiencies, or because changes could achieve improved coordination in the system. Presenters indicated there is a level of unnecessary complexity and difficulty added when the same program is needed in more than one college region (e.g., two related First Nations' bands want to share a program but are located in different college areas, a business/industry is located in more than one college area, etc.) or when SIAST should or should not be directly involved.

We have been told that the Regional Colleges system is inefficient because of the duplication in professional and management personnel required to operate institutions which in terms of training institution standards are small-scale. There is a case to be made in support of this. There are many institutions in the country with similar numbers of non-instructional staff which have much larger numbers of students. Using this measuring stick, it can be claimed that efficiencies could be realized by enlarging the boundaries and reducing the number of colleges. However, for two reasons, the Panel does not find this argument compelling enough to make such a recommendation. First, the colleges already serve very large geographic areas. The areas are, on average, close to double the size of the new enlarged school divisions. Any significant enlargement of the geographic size of the colleges would make it very difficult to maintain effective community contact and involvement. Second, the Panel foresees that the colleges will progressively assume an increasingly larger responsibility for training, as the NTM becomes more and more extensively used. The result will be increased activity and significantly increased participation, although admittedly not on the traditional model. The organizational complexity for this increased responsibility will require a strong complement of professionals in the colleges who, while not instructional staff in the traditional sense, will be key to the success of the NTM.

The second question regarding boundaries was referenced in the Panel's Interim Report. There we reported that the question had been raised as to whether college boundaries should be made co-terminus with the new school division boundaries. The argument in favour of this is not that of enlarging the college areas, but to improve that capacity for complementarities and co-operation in planning and programming.

The Panel finds itself in considerable sympathy with this point. Virtually all of those making submissions to the Panel in the rural areas expressed deep concern about the lack of strong connections between the school system and the training system. There are significant issues associated with linkages between schools and training. These include better knowledge and information for school students about high skill technical occupations, improving career counselling of school students, supporting school student participation in work experience and apprenticeship activities, improving high school preparation for training, improving high school completion, and reducing the demand for college delivered skills and adult basic education, among others. The Panel has concluded that there is a high priority need for better coordination and integration between the school system and the training system. The Panel believes that co-terminus boundaries in rural areas would contribute significantly to such coordination and integration, particularly if the colleges and the school divisions were directed by government policy to form formal partnerships. Such partnerships are possible without changed boundaries, but must be formed within a much more complex structure. The Panel believes that nothing should stand in the way of this integration and coordination.

The ASRC, in response to the Panel's interim report, expressed their disagreement with this suggestion for new realigned boundaries. The Panel appreciates that the extent of change in boundaries would be quite significant. This would be disruptive of developed working relationships and require reorganization and some staff rationalization. It would of course result in some implementation costs, and costs of disruption, including the possible loss of some effective work done within the existing boundaries. However, the potential benefits appear to be quite considerable. Common and co-operative effort between the school system and the training system will be essential if success is to be realized in preparing people work. The Panel considers it important that Saskatchewan Learning and the Regional Colleges undertake further exploration of an approach that would result in each regional college having boundaries co-terminus with two rural school divisions. The result would be seven Regional Colleges compared to eight at present.

The Panel recommends:

89. **High priority be placed on policies to maximize integration between schools/school divisions and training institutions/organizations in rural Saskatchewan in order to:**

    - **achieve better knowledge and information for school students about high skill technical occupations;**
    - **improve career counselling for students;**
    - **expand student participation in work experience and apprenticeship activities while they are in school;**
    - **improve high school preparation for training; and,**
    - **improve high school completion rates.**

90. **Saskatchewan Learning form a Task Group, with representation from the new school divisions and the Regional Colleges, mandated to:**

    - **examine the potential for improved co-operation and coordination between the Regional Colleges and the new rural school divisions; and,**
    - **take maximum advantage of the potential for more cost effective programming made possible through partnerships with the new larger rural school divisions.**

11.7 Farm and Agricultural Training

The face of farming and agriculture has been changing rapidly in the province. Farms are becoming ever larger and technically more complex. Specialization is driven by competition and efficiency. International competition, often highly subsidized, creates a relentless push for increased productivity. Farming has become a truly high tech, high skilled, knowledge-based occupation.

These changes have made it necessary to approach the knowledge and training needs of farmers differently than was once the case. The generalist advisor is no longer able to meet needs. This has led to a revamping of the agricultural extension system. Agricultural representatives are no longer the core of the education system for farmers.

Governments, both federal and provincial, have been developing new approaches to serving needs. Industry-based training is becoming more common. Institutional-based training meets some of the need, with SIAST offering a number of programs. However, the situation is currently very much in flux. New initiatives are being reviewed and some new programs put in place. The continued importance of farming makes it essential that the training system recognize the needs of farmers and undertake to serve those needs as best as is possible.

In June 2005, the Saskatchewan and Canada Agriculture and Food Ministers announced a new program designed to help farmers and their spouses increase their family income through improved farm practices or through increased off-farm income. Saskatchewan is receiving $21.96 million under the Canadian Agricultural Skills Service (CASS) program aimed at improving the on-farm operation through training. Specifically, CASS provides financial assistance to help participants develop learning plans and access training in areas such as business management, accrual accounting, finance, human resource management or training to acquire skills for starting a new business.

Farm families with a net family income of $45,000 or less are eligible to apply for the CASS. An Assessment and an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) valued at $2,000 will be developed for all eligible participants. Beginning farmers, regardless of family income, receive a skills assessment and an ILP. Approved farmers and their spouses are each eligible to receive benefits. The maximum benefits include training and related costs for the duration of an ILP, and include:

- support for formal and informal learning and training;
- support for related costs (i.e., dependent care, travel costs and other allowances while on travel status); and,
- costs associated with skills and learning activities, such as tuition and textbooks.

Human Resources Skills Development Canada will be involved in delivery, and it is expected that Regional Colleges will be extensively involved.

A number of submissions made to the Panel support the development of flexible, decentralized, and individualized learning packages. Considerable emphasis was placed on technology and on the need for Regional Colleges and industry to be involved. The Green Certificate program offered through the Department of Agriculture and Food is a good program that needs increased recognition and support. Program training progresses from the Technician level to Supervisor and on to Business Manager. The program provides practical, hands-on training for agriculture in Saskatchewan.

There appears to be general agreement that a new Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Agriculture Training and Education (SACATE) should be formed. A committee called SACAES (Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Agriculture Extension Services), which was part of the Saskatchewan Agricultural Services Coordinating Committee (SASCC), became defunct when the Extension Services Branch of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food was eliminated with the 2004/05 provincial budget. SACATE had been proposed to replace SACAES. This committee could play a significant role in helping all stakeholders identify education and training needs for the agricultural sector and to act as a coordination agency. There is also general agreement that the findings of ACRE should be acknowledged and used to help shape the future of training in farming areas of the province.

The Panel recommends:

91. **The training system and Regional Colleges in particular play an active role in delivering CASS and industry supported training in agriculture.**

92. **The proposed Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Agriculture Training and Education (SACATE) be formed, with the support of the training system.**

93. **The ACRE findings related to rural and agricultural training be supported by the training system.**

94. **The Green Certificate program offered through the Department of Agriculture and Food receive increased recognition and support.**

11.8 Support for Northern Training

The northern part of the training system is of particular importance. It has a rapidly growing Aboriginal youth population. The vast majority of people are committed to living and working in the north. Employment levels are still far below that of the rest of the province and unemployment levels too high.

It is a challenge to provide effective education and training in the North. Distance and size very much work against the traditional approaches which depend upon classrooms and traditional instruction.

Major advances are nevertheless taking place in education and training. The growth in mining has meant that there are now a number of good paying jobs in the North. Through collaboration between all parties, many northern people now have access to jobs. The people of the Athabasca region, for instance, are now employed in substantial numbers, notwithstanding the remoteness of the communities. In fact, all across the North substantial numbers of people can be found working in the resources sector.

Northlands College has had a great impact. So too have teacher training programs, including the Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) and the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP). The work of the Prince Albert Grand Council and the Meadow Lake Tribal Council has been exemplary. The Northern Labour Market Committee has been instrumental in labour market planning and innovation in the North. Employers have joined in important partnerships already mentioned. The Northern Lights School Board is working to improve the mathematics and sciences studies in its high schools and in developing career services and employment bridging.

The experience of the North is proving that the NTM works. The NTM's principles have been applied in the North for quite some time, and there have been great successes.

And, yet, training and jobs still elude a large number of people. Unemployment is high and employment still remains low. Participation in training and employment must increase. Trades people are needed desperately.

Innovation and creative programming will have to continue. The Panel has observed that the capacity is in place to make great strides. But more resources are need. Given the low levels of participation in training and work, a special catch up effort is needed.

The Panel recommends:

95. **The unique barriers faced by northern learners be given special consideration to support a rapid increase in training and employment bridging in the North. Assistance should be available to Northlands College, DTI, and SIIT based on their ability to increase training and bridging to employment.**

12

SIAST

Chapter 12: SIAST

12.1 Introduction

SIAST is the largest institution in the system. An overview of SIAST has already been presented. This section will focus on SIAST as the central institution for the vast majority of certificate and diploma programs.

SIAST plans to offer approximately 170 certificate and diploma programs during the 2005/06 academic year. In addition, SIAST expects approximately 27,000 individual course registrations.

Figure 12.1

SIAST's Five Year FLE Trend

FLE's per Division	Forecast	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Five Year
	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	Change
Business and Entrepreneurial Studies*	1,687	1,816	1,815	1,836	1,833	146
Community Services	1,434	1,303	1,300	1,311	1,280	154
Industrial Training	3,109	3,318	3,290	3,332	3,365	256
Nursing	1,056	982	954	836	803	253
Science and Health	1,559	2,522	2,586	2,547	2,414	855
Technology	2,086	2,021	2,038	1,987	1,965	121
Total Certificate & Apprenticeship	**10,931**	**11,962**	**11,983**	**11,849**	**11,660**	**729**

Source: SIAST

The FLE is a standard unit of measurement for student enrolment that is consistent for various delivery modes that are utilized by SIAST. This number has changed little over the last five years, although there has been some shift across program areas.

Program Advisory Committees provide a link between SIAST and business and industry. SIAST has program advisory committees for each program. Through these committees, SIAST ensures curriculum matches opportunities and needs in the workplace - an approach designed to promote high levels of employer satisfaction with SIAST graduates. Committee members come from a wide variety of backgrounds in both the public and private sectors. The main role of committee members is to provide input on ongoing program development and delivery. Industry and businesses with established ties to SIAST were generally satisfied with the programs offered and with the program's graduates. However, industry and businesses without programs at SIAST were less satisfied and expressed concern that they were not adequately consulted regarding their training needs.

Employers also expressed concern that new graduates need more practical work experience.

SIAST has made significant progress converting curriculum to a technology enhanced format. If the realities of the NTM are to come to fruition this work must be enhanced and supported by faculty. As well, attention must be paid to student resources to ensure success with this learning methodology.

SIAST's comprehensive education equity program supports ongoing initiatives to the develop a student body which is representative of Saskatchewan's population. Education Equity Program strategies are intended to identify, eliminate and/or reduce barriers and provide positive supports and opportunities to ensure student success. Targeted equity groups include: persons of Aboriginal ancestry, persons with disabilities, women in predominately male trades, and members of visible minorities.

Despite system-wide initiatives to increase the number of Aboriginal people within the training system, data from SIAST's Education Program indicate that the numbers of students enrolled in programs has actually declined slightly over a seven-year reporting period. Compared to results from 1997/98, the percentage of individuals under the equity program for 2003/04 was as follows:

- Aboriginal enrolment decreased by 1%;
- Disabled people enrolment increased by 0.9%;
- Enrolment of people who are visible minorities increased by 1.1%; and,
- Enrolment of women in predominately male trades decreased by 7.7%.

A high percentage of the SIAST Aboriginal enrolment is made up of students enrolled in the ABE program. Forty-three (43.2%) percent of SIAST's ABE enrollees were of Aboriginal descent. Given the changing provincial demographics and the projected demand for skilled workers, the high percentage of Aboriginal students in ABE combined with an actual decrease in the total percentage of Aboriginal students is cause for concern. Despite successes, Aboriginal participation in programs will have to expand.

Recognition of Prior Learning strategies have been implemented at SIAST and this process must be integrated into all phases of program design and delivery. SIAST has been a significant leader in technology enhanced learning, but the commitment needs to be continued and expanded to fulfill the expectations set out in this report.

12.2 Changing Role of SIAST within the New Training Model

The 2000 SIAST review stated that SIAST has been known as the pre-eminent institution for technical education and skills training in the province, and that no other institution has the province-wide responsibility to prepare graduates where technical skills are required. The preceding review of the nature and extent of SIAST's activities confirms that SIAST indeed does play a major role in the training system.

The challenge for the Panel in reviewing SIAST within the context of the training system as a whole has been two fold. The first has been to assess whether the traditional recognition of SIAST as pre-eminent is still relevant within the NTM, since training has changed a great deal over the past few years.

The second challenge of the Panel in reviewing SIAST has been that of judging how well SIAST functions today as a training institution and as part of the overall training system. As the Panel has indicated, success must be measured not only on how each separate player functions in the system, but also on whether the degree of co-operation, support, and integration is maximized to achieve greater overall results.

12.3 Policy Direction and Responsiveness

The Panel has recommended that a Training System Planning and Coordinating Council (Chapter 6) be established. One of the purposes of the Council is to improve the planning and policy making processes in the system. The Council will provide the Minister with a new vehicle to achieve coherence and integration in the overall direction of the training system.

As the largest certificate and diploma granting institution in the province with the main responsibility for the courses and curriculum for certificates and diplomas issued in the province, SIAST has a major impact throughout the whole training system. It is, thus, critically important that SIAST's plans and actions be consistent with and supportive of the direction of the system as a whole.

The NTM is firmly rooted in the philosophy that training must be flexible and learner-centered. The Panel is concerned that the recent policy decision to withdraw from competency based programming has limited both the learner-centeredness and the flexibility of programs. In order to meet the projected training needs of both learners and employers, all training institutions will be forced to develop programs which offer a variety of options, including competency-based programs, alternate time schedules, distributed, and technology enhanced programming, and year-round delivery.

The panel has identified tensions and conflict between SIAST and other parts of the system that at times do not contribute to maximum effectiveness and efficiency in pursuit of provincial objectives. As in all such situations of conflict, the sources of the conflict and the responsibility for it are not simple or easy to attribute to any one party. In any event who is at fault, if anyone, is not the issue. What is needed are systems and processes to ensure that all partners contribute fully to meeting the immense challenges facing the training system in the future. Institutional needs and wishes must be secondary to the overall interests of the system. The future is so challenging and so demanding of special measures as to make it absolutely essential that all the key parties are rowing together in the collective enterprise.

The Panel proposes an improved process with respect to the setting and implementation of SIAST policy. It will be an extension of the system wide approach recommended by the Panel. The new system wide approach will result in a reduced independence on the part of SIAST with respect to policy matters in terms of supporting a partnership of equals within a coherent training system. This is a necessary consequence of the new level of integration the Panel believes is necessary for the system to be effective, and it will require a commitment from the SIAST Board and management to work fully and cooperatively within the new system. The horizontal relationships between actors in the system must be strengthened. SIAST, as the dominant actor in the system, must be integrated fully into this horizontally-unified system characterized by reduced fragmentation and conflict within the system, active collaboration and co-operation in addressing system issues, and the development of a shared vision.

There have been some important developments over the last few years, including the production by SIAST of annual business plans. That should continue, but more needs to be done.

The Panel recommends:

> **96. The SIAST Board be mandated to focus on institutional management, with members appointed on the basis of their contribution to effective and efficient management oversight.**

12.4 SIAST Control of Certificate and Diploma Programs

Within the public training system, SIAST maintains a virtual monopoly with respect to certificate and diploma programs. Within the larger provincial post-secondary system, the universities offer some certificates and diplomas, but on a very circumscribed basis in areas related to established academic teaching programs, SIIT offers some certificate and diploma courses, and private vocational schools offer a limited number of certificates. The result is that SIAST has the significantly largest responsibility for developing programs, curriculum, instructional materials and usually instruction, andragogy and accreditation. The Regional Colleges and DTI, acting as brokers, identify the need for and organize SIAST courses and programs in their areas. SIAST curriculum, instructional materials and methods, instructors (unless SIAST personnel are not available, in which SIAST must approve the alternate) and other regulations regarding facilities and arrangements must be followed. SIAST also monitors courses offered through the colleges with site visits. The college collects the tuition, but must pay SIAST for the course, supports, instruction and monitoring. The fee schedule is set by SIAST.

Existing legislation and regulations do permit Regional Colleges to offer programs with the approval of Saskatchewan Learning, but to the knowledge of the Panel this has never happened and no procedures have been established to make it happen or to encourage it. The Panel could not find any colleges who have any knowledge of what the process would be, and most were skeptical that the provision was actually meant to be used.

The SIAST Review Committee in 2000 weighed the possibility of a change in this approach so that the colleges would "assume responsibility on a provincial basis for certificate programs that have high off campus usage" (SIAST Review, 2000). Under this option, certificate programs would be shifted from SIAST to the colleges. The Committee recognized benefits in terms of greater responsiveness to northern and rural needs, but it is not apparent whether the Committee considered other options, such as permitting colleges to offer certificate programs, with SIAST continuing to do so at the locations of existing campuses and in cases where the colleges opt to have SIAST provided courses. The reason, of course, is that this model would permit a form of limited competition between SIAST and the colleges.

The Committee rejected the alternative of shifting certificate programs to the colleges, stating, "disadvantages include the high potential for fragmentation of curriculum development, loss of standardized approaches, and less public acceptance of credentials issued by colleges rather than a nationally recognized institution like SIAST." These have long been the arguments used to support a relatively centralized model of institutional based training. This model has commonalities with traditional production models of the industries that were traditionally served by technical training institutes.

Under the traditional training model, courses were standardized in terms of curriculum and instructional methods, offered in lock-step fashion, largely served new entrants just out of school who were predominantly young and single, and overwhelmingly male. Completion of programs in the traditional model followed a defined critical path, with entrants expected to posses certain basic skills, to be "good with their hands," and to have little academic interest or inclination. Competencies acquired were largely mechanical or physical and learning was assumed to require drill, repetition, and strict and detailed direction. Students were expected to be course-ready at the beginning and production-ready at the end, to become part of a stable workforce serving a standardized, static, industrial production process.

Historically, many of the students were from the urban centers in which major facilities were located, and the dominant role of agriculture and farming in the rural areas meant that the demand by rural residents to enroll in trades programs was not large. It is, nevertheless, not surprising that in a rural province the model was sometimes criticized as being too centralized. Policy makers for many years felt that such criticism was misguided since no other model was thought to be practicable.

The formation of the community colleges in the 1970s was the first systematic attempt to address the decentralization issue. The intention was that the community colleges serve more general community education needs not tied to employment. Where possible, demands for employment-related training needed by adults not able to participate in centralized programs geared to formal credentials within a fixed time, the colleges were to use a pre-employment training approach.

The brokerage model that was brought in with the community colleges has served the system well and should continue as part of the array of choices available to the colleges. However, the traditional model of training referenced in the above is no longer the standard way of looking at modern training. It is now recognized that quality training can be offered on a highly decentralized basis with a range of approaches to facilities and equipment. Standardization has been replaced by flexibility in all aspects of programs. Curriculum is often modular, permitting differing course lengths and times. Offerings are learner centered, meaning that content and instructional methods are adapted to the learner and the community. Learners differ greatly, one from another even in particular programs. Learners now often have jobs and families, making relocation to take training less feasible. Women attend in equal proportions to men. Technology is widely used, making decentralized and individualized instruction feasible, provided the right supports are provided. Innovations based on technology make it probable that in the not too distant future, not only will virtual learning spaces be common, but virtual laboratories and shops also will be possible. The quality of instructors available in communities has increased greatly compared to a few years ago, meaning that oversight of instruction has become less necessary to assure quality.

Modern training has gone through a radical transformation in other respects as well. Lifelong learning is now a necessity in the work life of most people. Prior learning and work experience are understood and accepted as valid components of learning and deserving of recognition.

The Panel's position is that the new approach to training must be supported, accommodated, and recognized wherever possible. It is an approach that is part and parcel of the productivity and access agenda. It works and it is needed in order to achieve success.

The Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIIT have become well developed, mature training institutions with the capacity and ability to offer high quality programs consistent with modern training principles. After many years of development, they can and should be entrusted with the responsibility to offer courses and programs with a high degree of autonomy. The time has come for them be treated as equal partners, not subordinates. SIIT has recently achieved that recognition. It is time that the Regional Colleges and DTI receive recognition and responsibility as partners with SIAST in a common enterprise.

For these reasons, and given the urgent need to increase participation in training, the Panel has concluded that the monopoly that SIAST retains on credit programs is no longer necessary and is inconsistent with the overall approach to training that the Panel supports.

The Panel recommends:

97. **That SIAST no longer be the sole provider of "for credit" training in the province, and that the Regional Colleges and DTI be mandated to**

offer "for credit" training courses and programs, including the following:

- **SIAST's proprietary interest in its curricula and course materials for such programs be modified to place them in the public domain with respect to the Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIIT;**
- **SIAST no longer retain supervisory authority over the courses offered by the Regional Colleges and DTI;**
- **The Regional Colleges and DTI be obligated to provide instruction for course offerings in such a way that students are assured credits will be transferable to SIAST programs; and**
- **a special committee of the PLAR initiative be empowered to adjudicate and resolve disputes about course recognition between SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and DTI.**

98. That Saskatchewan Learning encourage SIAST to develop programs, courses and the related teaching material to be shared with the Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIIT.

12.5 Coordination of Industry Initiated Training

Within the system, it is unclear as to what the first point of contact should be when an employer wishes to seek significant new training support. Such support can often be essential in maintaining the competitiveness of an existing operation, or in supporting a new operation that will advance the economic development of the province or a region. Often enterprises or industry partners seeking training support have quite complex skills needs requiring innovative measures that differ significantly from the conventional models of course and program offerings. SIAST has indicated to the Panel that the absence of a clearly established point of initial contact and coordination generates confusion and reduces effectiveness and has requested that this matter be addressed in order to achieve greater system integration. The Panel considered the possibility that SIAST be mandated with this responsibility. Under this approach, SIAST would be the central contact point, and any industry request made of a regional college would be referred to SIAST. We also considered other options that would see this mandate divided between the Regional Colleges and SIAST. The Panel has rejected all of these alternatives in favour of a consortium that will have a distinct identity as a partnership involving SIAST and the Regional Colleges.

The Panel recommends:

99. A new Industry Liaison and Coordination Office (ILCO) be established as a "one stop shop" as a place of contact and assistance for employers

in need of either new or significantly increased training support from the public training system.

100. The mandate of the ILCO will be to address requests for support and to refer such requests to the appropriate partner/partners within the system.

- **That the ILCO will be managed and directed by a small committee representing SIAST and the Regional Colleges, with one or two additional representatives able to speak for business and industry; and,**

- **That the ILCO be financed by contributions from SIAST and Regional Colleges through a levy proportionate to annual overall expenditures.**

12.6 Increasing capacity of SIAST

The Panel clearly recognizes the need for expanded training activity in the province. Such an expansion cannot be realized without increased financing of the system. For SIAST, operating funding from the Saskatchewan Learning has remained about constant since 1992/93, after taking into account the rate of inflation. The mid 1990s actually saw a decline, but that has been restored in more recent years.

There can be no doubt that additional financial resources will be required to meet overall system training needs over the coming years. After a period of restraint based on fiscal and labour force realties, it will be necessary for SIAST to be provided with a growing programming budget on a sustained and predictable basis. The additional amount that SIAST should receive is difficult to determine in exact terms given that it is expected that more training over the next few years will migrate to the Regional Colleges. As well, SIAST revenue from the Regional Colleges for credit training contracts will decrease significantly from the almost $3 million in 2004/05. The distribution of funding between SIAST and the colleges will be dealt with later in this report. The basic principle should be that funding be distributed for certificate programs in proportion to participation by learners. SIAST should be encouraged to expand enrolments in diploma programs consistent with learner demand and the demands of the labour market, and operating funding should also be increased for diploma programs in proportion to increased enrolments.

The following Figure 12.2 shows total SIAST expected revenues and expenditures for the next five years. The 2004/05 budget is the actual budget for that year.

Figure 12.2

SIAST Revenue and Expenditures

	2004/2005 Budget	2005/2006 Projection	2006/2007 Projection	2007/2008 Projection	2008/2009 Projection	2009/2010 Projection
SIAST						
Tuition Fees	19,212	19,223	19,902	20,464	20,978	21,512
Other Revenue	124,077	135,227	135,781	136,025	136,134	136,233
Total Revenues	143,289	154,450	155,683	156,489	157,112	157,746
Salaries and Benefits	95,068	99,480	100,374	101,184	101,907	102,541
Non-Salary Expenses	49,444	54,970	55,698	55,694	55,594	55,594
Total Expenses	144,512	154,450	156,072	156,878	157,501	158,135
NET	-1,222		-389	-389	-389	-389

Source: SIAST

The Panel does not have information on increased enrolments that are expected to accompany these increased expenditures and is unable to form a judgment on the appropriateness of the projections.

A related but somewhat separate question arises with respect to significant facilities expansion at the SIAST campuses as a part of a strategy to increase capacity in the system. Under the existing system of capital funding, SIAST identifies capital requirements and forwards these to Saskatchewan Learning for review. Saskatchewan Learning then, advances those it considers priority to Treasury Board and Cabinet through the annual budget review process.

SIAST's most immediate needs for capital are for expansion at the Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon where the pressures arising from an expansionary economy are the most immediate. The provisions for the Palliser Campus at Moose Jaw are for renewal of aging facilities and for expansion.

A theme throughout this report is that an expansion in the overall capacity of the training system will be required. This will not be possible without a higher level of utilization of classrooms, shops and laboratories. There will also be a need for regular upgrading of the equipment in shops and laboratories in response to the ever-growing sophistication of technology in virtually all occupations in which skilled workers are required.

However, the transformation of training that the Panel is recommending will support an already well developed trend toward more flexible training offered through alternatives that are not as highly dependent upon central facilities as once was the case. Contributing to this will be continued increasing reliance on technology enhanced learning, industry based training, decentralization and greater efficiencies in the use of the centralized facilities. The most pressing demands are with respect to modernizing equipment in shops and facilities. Under these conditions, the Panel advises caution with respect to major investments in SIAST facilities, but recognizes that the upgrading of shops and laboratories is a necessity, and that expansion is required at an early date of some facilities, particularly at the Kelsey Campus. Limited other new facilities will be needed, depending upon the extent of participation rate increases. In the view of the Panel, the SIAST capital planning is effective, but the results need to be assessed relative to the outcomes for students (i.e., increases in numbers of learners actually occurring). The current arrangements for considering and funding SIAST capital needs function well and will in the view of the Panel be able to adequately address SIAST capital needs.

The Panel recommends:

101. Diploma program enrolments be expanded consistent with learner demand and the demands of the labour market.

102. Capacity at SIAST be increased in proportion to participation by learners and employability of learners in certificate programs (recognizing Regional Colleges and DTI will be expected to become more active in offering certificate courses and programs); and expanded diploma programs.

103. Support for technology enhanced learning be maintained and the level of support increased if the use of TEL increases.

104. Saskatchewan Learning and Treasury Board recognize that somewhat larger commitments will be required in the future than in the past to meet the expanding needs for training facilities at the SIAST campuses, but expenditures be based on clearly demonstrated need and use.

12.7 Employer Satisfaction

In 2004, SIAST undertook a survey of employer satisfaction with SIAST graduates. Results of the survey showed that a significant majority (84.2%) of employers were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall preparation of SIAST graduates. Further, employers indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the job-related knowledge (80.5%) and the job-related skills (84.8%) of SIAST graduates. Employers indicated a slightly lower rating for their satisfaction with graduates' general employability or essential skills (79.4%).

Some of the issues identified by employers as needing improvement included:

- employability skills/essential life skills included in curriculum of all programs;
- writing and oral communications skills lacking - not only resume writing;
- expectations of behaviour in a professional workplace, including dress codes and standards of conduct;
- career planning and realistic goal setting required;
- job shadowing to help students make better career choices;

- high school students should be encouraged to do more career research (i.e., what is expected to be successful in a career);
- offer more basic education training in smaller communities;
- high school mathematics and science offerings are required in northern communities;
- immigrants require additional language training including medical terminology for specialty occupations (Home Care/Special Care Aide Program);
- apprenticeship training should be more flexible – consider two day Friday/Saturday offering where employer and employee each give up one day;
- increase the number of students with disabilities completing credentialed training (i.e., researcher in health services for the disabled, administrative assistant). In addition, incorporate updated knowledge of disability issues and programs in existing programs/services;
- increase number of graduates of Aboriginal ancestry working in all occupational areas;
- dissatisfaction expressed from many sources with the First Qualified/First Admitted admission process;
- employers believe applicants are not properly screened and end up in a career that is unsuited for them (i.e., Accountancy, Youth Care Worker, Medical Diagnostics, Dental Assistant/Hygiene, Film and Video Productions, Industrial and Power Engineering programs); and,
- wait lists for many programs are problematic.

The Panel was pleased to find that this survey was undertaken by SIAST and that it was available on the SIAST website for other institutions/organizations, and government to access.

The Panel recommends:

105. The implementation of supportive remedies for employer concerns, where appropriate, be considered from a system-wide perspective as well as a SIAST perspective.

106. SIAST report the findings of the survey to other appropriate institutions and organizations (e.g., schools).

107. SIAST be commended for its undertaking to understand and respond to employer views and interests.

12.8 Program Admission

The Panel was told that students should have timely access to programs from which they are likely to be able to obtain employment. However, in many presentations to the Panel, numerous concerns were expressed about the management of the waiting lists at

SIAST and the unwillingness to share lists with Regional Colleges who offer similar programs. We were informed that waiting lists for certain programs at SIAST can be as long as five years or more. There is high student demand for a few programs and this has resulted in substantial waitlists (nine programs with wait lists longer than five years). However, SIAST must balance student demand with employment potential for graduates and the resources available/required (e.g., availability of clinical sites for students in health care programs, laboratories, etc.).

In some instances, planned programs and services are not implemented because qualified instructors are not available to undertake term contracts. In other cases, programs and services are cancelled due to insufficient enrolment. In some cases cancellations could be avoided or prevented by sharing waiting lists and making students aware of other locations where the programs or services are available.

Employers and students expressed concern about SIAST's First Qualified, First Admitted (FQFA) policy[19]. Concerns regarding the FQFA policy include:

- students with the most potential to succeed may not be admitted to a program of their choice in a timely manner;
- in programs with extensive waitlists, recent high school graduates are most likely to have the longest waits;
- students with the minimum level of academic achievement are enrolled, which negatively impacts retention rates;
- there is potential for students on a long waitlist to go outside of the province for training and subsequently not return; and,
- there is a potential for students to enroll in another program for which they are less suited.

The Panel recommends:

108. SIAST prepare a strategy to eliminate wait lists for all programs for which there is short-term (two years or less) employment demand for graduates and that the strategy be submitted to the Minister for approval.

109. SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and DTI develop a system to regularly share waitlists (adhering to recognized privacy guidelines) when similar programs are offered by more than one training institution, and to approach SIIT to determine its interest in participating in this sharing process.

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[19] This policy is applied to all SIAST programs with the exception of the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan, which is a joint program between SIAST, the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), and the First Nations University of Canada and a competitive admissions process is used.

110. SIAST seriously reconsider its First Qualified, First Admitted policy considering both the negative and positive impacts this policy has had on student admission and retention.

12.9 Other Programming Issues

The Panel has found that SIAST has been an active supporter of PLAR and TEL initiatives. It is important for the overall system that SIAST continue an active program of innovation in both areas.

The panel recommends:

111. SIAST continue a leadership role in PLAR and TEL.

TRAINING SYSTEM REVIEW

13

Specific Program Issues

Chapter 13: Specific Program-Related Suggestions to the Panel

In addition to the issues described in previous chapters, the Panel was also invited to consider the following issues, ideas and concerns.

General

- The next TSR Panel should have representatives from business and industry as well as Aboriginal representation.
  - ***Recommend the Minister take this under advisement when setting up the next review panel.***
- Representation on the SIAST Board should be increased, with a significantly higher proportion of members being Aboriginal and two Fransaskois administrators.
  - ***Recommend the Minister initiate action to expand the diversity of the SIAST Board, but that the total number of Board members decrease to a maximum of 10 members.***
- That French-language college education in Saskatchewan be undertaken through an affiliation between SIAST and the Corporation du College Mathieu.
  - ***Recommend that this affiliation proceed.***
- Encourage phased-in retirement or move retirement to 70 years of age.
  - ***Recommend the SIAST Board, SATCC Board, the boards of the Regional Colleges, and government review staff/faculty retention and succession planning policies giving consideration to the benefits and detractors of this concept.***
- Strengthen the links between the training system and custody facilities.
  - ***Recommend the training system implement a plan to strengthen these linkages (including skills training, literacy and ABE).***
- The need for the following new programs was identified:
  - mining engineering courses
  - WHMIS as an orientation course
  - nuclear medicine
  - radiation therapy training

  - rig technician program
  - funeral director
  - dental technology program (by classroom, distance or internet)

    - ***Recommend the system's training needs assessments further investigate demand for these new programs with a view to potentially develop them in the short to medium term.***

- Partner with Saskatchewan Labour (as a resource) in the development of new programs.

  - ***Recommend the training system providers include Saskatchewan Labour as appropriate in the development of new programming.***

Literacy

- More flexibility and a learner-centered approach to literacy training.

- Pay literacy instructors and don't depend on volunteers.

  - ***Recommend the suggestions listed above be referred to the Literacy Commission for consideration.***

Nursing/Psychiatric Nursing/Practical Nursing

- Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) should move out of SIAST and be delivered in its entirety by the university.

- Psychiatric Nursing - Within the NEPS program Registered Psychiatric Nursing (RPN) credentials should be accepted for faculty postings relevant to RPN experience; a Psychiatric Nursing Diploma program that would include courses toward a BA in Psychiatric Nursing should be developed; Psychiatric Nursing should be revitalized.

- Recruit male and visible minority groups for the nursing faculties.

- Provide a program to ladder Licensed Practical Nurses into Psychiatric Nursing.

- Establish a training facility in the Athabasca region to train nurses

  - ***Recommend a review of the NEPS program delivery model be undertaken and that the all the concerns and suggestions listed above be included in that review.***

SATCC

- New trade designations: designate rig technician, pipeline operator, natural gas compression technologist, gas utility operator as recognized trades and develop programs to support them.

  - ***Recommend SATCC strongly consider designation of these trades.***

- Increase provincial funding to the Northern Institute Training Program (a forestry specific training program for First Nations and Aboriginal people).

  - ***Recommend this concept be referred to the Steering Committee currently conducting a review of the Forestry Sector Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Forestry Training Subcommittee of the Northern Labour Market Committee.***

- Allow more than one vendor to provide crane training.

  - ***Recommend SATCC consider implementation of this suggestion.***

Appendix 1

Building on Strength: SIAST Committee of Review Report, 2003/04 Progress Report

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
Priority I: An Appropriate and Progressive Mandate			
Certificate and Diploma Programs 1.1 SIAST to retain mandate as province's primary public institution for delivery of technical education and training.	**Learning/ SIAST**	**Completed**	
Applied Research and Technology Transfer 1.2 SIAST's involvement in applied research and technology transfer to be recognized within its mandate. Applied research and technology transfer to be carried out in collaboration with industry.	**SIAST**	**Completed**	- Introduced applied research and technology framework at SIAST. - Allocated funds to administer applied research projects through partnerships with other educational institutions and external agencies.
Advanced Technical Education Credentials 1.3.1 SIAST to enhance options for Saskatchewan people to attain advanced technical education credentials through collaboration with the province's universities.	**Learning** **SIAST**	**Ongoing** **Ongoing**	- See 1.4.1 Credit Transfer Guide. - Developed a plan for the expansion of NEPS offerings with an additional 32 seats at Wascana Campus in 2004-05, 18 seats at Wascana Campus in 2005-06, and another 50 seats at University of Saskatchewan through second degree option in spring 2005. - Implemented a joint degree program in resource and environmental studies with University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada. - Implemented a SIAST Computer Information Systems post-diploma/B.Sc. in Computer Sciences, University of Regina. - Hosting MOU with Campus Saskatchewan. - Developed joint offering with Athabasca University for a career counselling course for individuals working with Aboriginal clientele.
1.3.2 Collaboration with the universities, SIAST and Saskatchewan Learning[20] to identify and develop system-wide strategies for enhancing options and career paths for students.	**Learning/ SIAST**	**Ongoing**	- Participated in the development of several partnership agreements with the universities.
1.3.3 SIAST to collaborate in such areas as credit transfer between diploma and degree programs with the University of Saskatchewan.	**SIAST**	**Completed**	- Developed collaborative/cooperative arrangements for the transfer of credit for SIAST programs and courses in Business, Nursing, Engineering Technology, Hospitality, Food Services, Health

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[20] Formerly Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
			Services, Sciences, Recreation, Tourism, and Technology.
Credit Transfer and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) 1.4.1 SIAST and Saskatchewan Learning to cooperate with other post-secondary institutions to develop a provincial vision and action plan for increasing credit transfer on a system-wide basis.	**Learning/ SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Learning provided additional $50K for provincial electronic credit transfer guide and committed $70K for creation of the Saskatchewan Council of Admissions and Transfer (SaskCAT). • Established a Transfer Guide Steering Committee to advance a provincial credit transfer initiative and a new online guide.
1.4.2 SIAST to ensure transferability of applied and advanced certificates in certificate and diploma programs, and to work towards mobility and career laddering for students from private vocational schools.	**SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Considered course equivalencies upon request from the private vocational schools.
1.4.3 SIAST to continue improving its internal processes and collaborate with Saskatchewan Learning, other post-secondary institutions and industry in developing a provincial vision and action plan for increasing prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) on a system-wide basis.	**Learning/ SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Learning provided funding to SIAST for PLAR development initiatives. • Facilitated development of formal PLAR policies/procedures between SIAST and the Regional Colleges system. • Co-chaired a steering committee for creation of a provincial coordinating group for the recognition of prior learning (RPL).
Extension University Programming 1.5 SIAST to continue brokering university programming and ensure appropriate distribution of costs and revenues with the University of Saskatchewan.	**SIAST**	**Completed**	
SIAST-University Collaboration 1.6 SIAST and the two universities to give increased priority to collaboration and partnerships to enhance programs and services, access and mobility for students, and use of resources.	**SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Expand NEPS offerings with an additional 32 seats at Wascana Campus in 2004-05, 18 seats at Wascana Campus in 2005-06, and another 50 seats at University of Saskatchewan through second degree option in spring 2005. • Implement a joint degree program in resource and environmental studies with the University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada. • Implemented a SIAST Computer Information Systems post-diploma/B.Sc. in Computer Sciences with the University of Regina. • Host MOU with Campus Saskatchewan. • Developed collaborative/cooperative

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
			arrangements with the universities for the transfer of credit for SIAST programs and courses in Business, Community and Human Services, Nursing, Engineering Technology, Hospitality and Food Services, Health Services and Sciences, Natural Resources, Recreation and Tourism, and Technology.
Basic Education 1.7.1 SIAST to retain its mandate for basic education and related programs and services and ensure this function is fully integrated and supported by making the following improvements:	**Learning/ SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Learning introduced Basic Education Redesign in January 2001. SIAST participated at various levels including a provincial task team to direct the redesign process, provincial PD events, curriculum advisory groups and new curriculum.
• Develop bridging strategies to support transitions from basic education to skills training and certificate and diploma programs for learners seeking to become better qualified for jobs;	**SIAST**	**Completed**	
• Incorporate employability skills into the basic education program within curriculum and instruction for academic subjects, and as a separate study unit for students who require these skills to augment their current training or work experience;	**SIAST**	**Completed**	
• Increase student retention through student services, assessment and counselling, appropriate instructional strategies suited to learner needs, and partnerships with First Nations and Métis institutions, K-12 education and community organizations.	**SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Implemented initiatives to foster learning and prepare students for employment including the Student Success Strategy, review of Counselling Services and Education Equity programs, exploration of opportunities for student housing and student health centers. • Implemented a Developmental English for Aboriginal Learners project.
1.7.2 Review of funding for training and employment services to consider integration of basic education within SIAST.	**Learning**	**Ongoing**	• Learning provides SIAST with an annual conditional grant for basic education and related programs.
Youth Training and Employment 1.8 SIAST to work with the K-12 education system, Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, First Nations and Métis organizations, industry and other agencies to address the needs of youth who are unemployed or seeking training and work experience to enter the labour force. Saskatchewan Learning to facilitate partnerships and forums to improve	**Learning** **SIAST**	**Ongoing** **Ongoing**	• Working with SATCC on career development and "high school to apprenticeship" initiatives to increase access to trade careers and matching apprenticeship training with current and future labour market needs. • Updated SIAST/SATCC training plan in response to current labour

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
training and employment options for youth.			market needs. • Initiated development of a Western Canada symposium with SATCC, SIIT, AHRDCC and WED to develop strategies for increased participation of Aboriginal people in apprenticeship and trades training. • Developed Super Saturday partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council and University of Saskatchewan. • In partnership with other educational institutions, Aboriginal partners and industry, developed proposal for CIC to increase the skill level of Saskatchewan youth in trades and technologies.
Priority II: A Commitment to Accessibility			
Expectations for Accessibility 2.1 SIAST and Saskatchewan Learning jointly develop expectations for increasing access to SIAST programs and consider labour market demands, quality of programs and instruction, and availability and use of resources.	**Learning/ SIAST** **SIAST**	**Ongoing** **Ongoing**	• Expand NEPS through additional funding from Learning. • Reviewing tuition and student ancillary fees for 2005-2006. • Implemented on-line applications to SIAST programs. • Delivered 300 course offerings through distance education. • Initiated development of a Learning Objects Repository. • Implemented a web-based integrated library management system. • Implemented a capacity and demand performance measure.
Learner-Centered Orientation 2.2 SIAST to embody a commitment to learning within its vision, programs and operations, and address the implications of a learner-centered orientation.	**SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Implemented initiatives to foster learning and prepare students for employment including the Student Success Strategy, review of Counselling Services and Education Equity programs, exploration of opportunities for student housing and student health centers. • Introduced Quality Learning Organization initiatives including faculty renewal (New Instructor Orientation, Faculty Certificate program, annual workshops for program heads and education extension consultants), curriculum review and development (learning outcomes), institutional effectiveness (policy review and renewal), Education and Training Framework alignment of all programs.

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
			• Developed new vision for SIAST.
Technology enhanced Learning 2.3.1 SIAST to give high priority to implementing its virtual campus plan, as part of the provincial technology enhanced learning strategy.	Learning/ SIAST	Completed	• Established Campus Saskatchewan. • SIAST hosting Campus Saskatchewan website with funding from Learning.
2.3.2 SIAST's virtual campus plan to address its role in providing support for learners wanting to access technology enhanced programs from other institutions.	SIAST	Completed	
Multi-Site Delivery 2.4 SIAST to enhance multi-site delivery of its programs and services throughout the province by maximizing delivery of courses and programs where people and jobs are located.	SIAST	Completed	
SIAST and Regional Colleges 2.5 SIAST and the Regional Colleges to revise their existing protocol agreement for brokerage of programs to:	SIAST	Completed	• Signed a new partnership agreement in June 2001.
• Establish a formal process for coordinating and integrating needs assessment, and identifying and addressing needs;	SIAST	Ongoing	• Developed two interpretation bulletins related to sharing of information and third party work to be signed by Regional Colleges.
• Clarify points of contact and channels of communication within the new SIAST organizational structure;	SIAST	Completed	• Signed two interpretation bulletins to encourage and enhance communication.
• Provide ways for Regional Colleges to have input into design, evaluation and updating of curriculum;	SIAST	Ongoing	
• Identify appropriate and reasonable timelines for SIAST to respond to requests from Regional Colleges;	SIAST	Completed	
• Recognize that Regional Colleges may broker programs from other institutions after giving SIAST an opportunity to respond;	Learning/ SIAST	Completed	
• Include avenues to work together in making the best use of technology enhanced learning and supporting learners at a distance;	Learning/ SIAST	Ongoing	• Participated in Campus Saskatchewan
• Clarify responsibilities for students, both legal and programmatic;	SIAST	Completed	
• Encourage co-operation between SIAST and the Regional Colleges in providing student services at the local level;	SIAST	Completed	
• Notify each other in identifying and responding to training needs in respective service areas.	SIAST	Ongoing	
First Nations and Métis Education & Training			

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
2.6.1 SIAST to revise federation agreement with Dumont Technical Institute.	**SIAST**	**Completed**	
2.6.2 SIAST to develop a formalized arrangement with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT).	**SIAST**	**Completed**	
2.6.3 SIAST to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve responsiveness to the needs of First Nations and Métis students attending SIAST programs.	**SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Initiated a new SIAST Aboriginal initiative to increase number of Aboriginal students and employees. • Implemented an Aboriginal Awareness program for all SIAST employees. • Initial planning underway for a Science and Health Aboriginal Student Services initiative involving SIAST, Regina, Qu'Appelle and Saskatoon Health regions, Learning and Health. • Implemented a Developmental English for Aboriginal Learners project. • Offered a career counselling course for individuals working with Aboriginal clientele in collaboration with Athabasca University. • Initiated development of a Western Canada symposium with SIIT and other partners to develop strategies for increased participation of Aboriginal people in apprenticeship and trades training. • In partnership with SIIT and other organizations, developed proposal for CIC to increase the skill level of Saskatchewan youth in trades and technologies. • Participating in Super Saturday partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council and University of Saskatchewan.
Priority III: Responsiveness to the Labour Market			
Labour Market Development Planning 3.4.1 SIAST and its partners, with leadership from Saskatchewan Learning, to develop processes at provincial and sectoral levels for labour market development planning and needs assessment. Saskatchewan Learning to facilitate this process and involve other partners such as industry, First Nations and Métis organizations, Regional Colleges, the universities, the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, Human Resources Skills Development Canada and other provincial departments.	**Learning/ SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Sector Partnership Program, in conjunction with the post-secondary sector, is working with industry to identify labour market and training needs and develop strategies to address them. • Saskatchewan Labour Market Network (SLMN) assumed the role of the provincial planning partnership articulated in the Labour Market Planning and Information Strategy (LMPI) with support from Learning. • Learning facilitated a meeting with a broad stakeholder involvement to

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
			coordinate planning of Practical Nursing training on a provincial basis.
Linkages to Major Employers, Industry Organizations and Economic Development 3.5.1 SIAST to develop increased linkages with employers and industry organizations to provide forums for information sharing, discussion of labour market and training issues, and avenues for co-operation.	SIAST	Ongoing	• Board, senior management, faculty and staff participated in a variety of activities and initiatives with business and industry, K-12 and post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutions, professional and educational organizations, and community groups.
3.5.2 Saskatchewan Learning to facilitate linkages between SIAST and key provincial government departments.	Learning	Ongoing	• Collaborated with Saskatchewan Health on aligning training needs with priorities of the health sector. Initiatives included labour market analysis of the nursing sector (including Practical Nursing) and sector partnership studies in the health sector. An analysis of medical diagnostics occupations is underway. • Worked with SIAST, University of Saskatchewan, and Health in coordinating expansion of the NEPS program. • Collaborated with SIAST, Health, and Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs to address occupational language training needs of foreign-trained nurses in Saskatchewan.
SIAST and Agricultural Programming 3.6 SIAST to participate in efforts of the agencies and institutions involved in training within the agricultural sector and address gaps in provincial and regional levels. Saskatchewan Learning and Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization to take lead in facilitating this process.	SIAST	Ongoing	• Led a consortium (Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario colleges) to deliver major training contract with AgExpert, a division of Farm Credit Canada.
Priority IV: Organizational Effectiveness			
SIAST Vision and Business Plan 4.1 SIAST to integrate Committee of Review recommendations into its vision and business plans.	SIAST	Completed	
Government-SIAST Relationships 4.2 SIAST and Saskatchewan Learning renew its relationship based on accountability and performance management. SIAST's business plan to be the foundation for developing a relationship based on clear expectations with a focus on outcomes.	Learning/ SIAST	Completed	• SIAST participated in implementation of the Sector Strategic Plan and the SIAST Business Plan reflects the objectives of the Sector Strategic Plan.
Human Resources and Organizational			

Review Committee Recommendations	Lead	Status	Activity 2003-2004
Development 4.3 SIAST to enhance professional development opportunities for staff.	**SIAST**	**Ongoing**	Quality Learning Organization initiatives incorporated into 2003-2008 business plan.
Communications with Students 4.4 SIAST to foster student input and involvement in ongoing and future operations.	**SIAST**	**Ongoing**	• Board and senior management provided opportunities for input and discussion with the four student associations.
Marketing & Communications with the Public 4.5 SIAST to continue implementation of its communications and marketing plan.	**Learning**	**Ongoing**	• Worked with its partners, including SIAST, to develop sector-wide communication plans, and provided them with information on post-secondary and provincial issues.
	SIAST	**Ongoing**	• Implemented its communication and marketing plan at local, regional, provincial, national and international levels. • Established Development Office with four SIAST campus foundation chapters.

Appendix 2

"FUTURES CLOSE TO HOME"
REGIONAL COLLEGES COMMITTEE OF REVIEW REPORT
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2003-04 & 05
ABBREVIATED

DRAFT March 26, 2003
Edited March 28,2003
Edited April 22, 2003
Edited Oct 17, 2003
Edited Jan 23, 2004
Edited Jan 28, 2004
Note: Numbering corresponds with the original document

Legend:
✓ = Done
IP = In progress
*** = Work commenced/completed**
SL = Saskatchewan Learning

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
RESPONSIVENESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS				
1. The Review Committee recommends that the Regional Colleges develop new roles and capabilities in using technology enhanced learning to meet the needs of learners, employers and communities. A network of technology enhanced learning centers is proposed to support access in rural and northern Saskatchewan to the growing number and variety of programs and services offered by post-secondary institutions in the province and elsewhere via electronic communications. Regional Colleges would perform the following functions:	• Final report on pilot projects due Mar 31/04. • Develop a sustainable long-term plan for the Network of TEL services (base line requirements for TEL services). • Implement sustainable plan for Network of TEL services.		* *	*
• Assist students to acquire skills to be successful in using technology enhanced learning such as study skills, computer skills, basic academic knowledge, and skills for self-directed learning;	• Through the pilot project develop and/or find tools and learning processes that will assist learners to participate and succeed using TEL.	IP	*	
• Provide information, advice, and counselling to learners on career planning and technology enhanced learning options appropriate to their needs;	• Increase support capacity.	IP	*	
• Provide opportunities for learning in group settings to complement on-line courses or programs;	• Assess learner needs and coordinate situations to assist students engaged in on-line learning subject to individual colleges TEL proposals.	IP	*	
• In co-operation with other credit granting post-secondary institutions offering technology enhanced learning options, serve as invigilators or test centers for learners who cannot travel to those institutions to write exams or demonstrate their knowledge and skills to obtain credit for their learning.	• Develop college system of exam invigilation with SIAST.	IP	*	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
7. The Review Committee recommends that the assessment of needs for university courses and programs also be included in the annual needs assessment process. Regional Colleges and the universities should collaborate to develop approaches and methods for identifying and prioritizing these needs, with the possibility of conducting in-depth assessments every few years.	• Review RC/university program agreement. (see Rec. 11)		*	
8. The Review Committee recommends that colleges clearly demonstrate linkages between the needs presented in their annual needs assessment reports and proposed programming in their business plans. It is also recommended that the methods and processes used by Regional Colleges to conduct their needs assessments be clearly outlined in their reports.	• Review needs assessment methods and processes with SLMN. • Develop and publish provincial annual needs assessment.		*	*
9. The Review Committee recommends that the current brokerage model and protocol agreement with SIAST be updated and revised to enhance delivery of technical education and training in rural and northern Saskatchewan. It is recommended that a new agreement: • Establish a formal process for SIAST and the Regional Colleges to coordinate and integrate their needs assessment processes and jointly plan how identified needs can be addressed. • Clarify points of contact and channels of communication for the Regional Colleges within SIAST's organizational structure. • Provide ways for colleges to have input into the design, evaluation and updating of curricula for programs that are brokered by colleges to address learning needs in their regions. • Identify appropriate and reasonable timelines for SIAST to respond to requests from Regional Colleges, to be determined mutually by SIAST and the colleges. • In addition to discussing their requirements with SIAST and giving SIAST an opportunity to respond before choosing an alternative provider, recognize that Regional Colleges may seek to broker programs from institutions other than SIAST. • Include avenues for SIAST and the Regional Colleges to work together in making the best use of technology enhanced learning and supporting learners at a distance. • Clarify institutions' responsibilities for students from a legal point of view, in terms of obligations for student support services, and for accountability and reporting purposes. • Encourage co-operation between the Regional Colleges and SIAST in providing student services at the local level; and • Continue to require SIAST and Regional Colleges to notify each other in identifying and responding to training needs in their respective service areas.	• Review and revise SIAST/ RC protocol Partnership agreement, (now known as the Partnership Agreement.)		*	

Appendix 2

"FUTURES CLOSE TO HOME"
REGIONAL COLLEGES COMMITTEE OF REVIEW REPORT
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2003-04 & 05
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RECOMMENDATIONS	**COMMENTS/ACTION**	**TIME LINE PLAN**		
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• Assist students to acquire skills to be successful in using technology enhanced learning such as study skills, computer skills, basic academic knowledge, and skills for self-directed learning;	• Through the pilot project develop and/or find tools and learning processes that will assist learners to participate and succeed using TEL.	IP	*	
• Provide information, advice, and counselling to learners on career planning and technology enhanced learning options appropriate to their needs;	• Increase support capacity.	IP	*	
• Provide opportunities for learning in group settings to complement on-line courses or programs;	• Assess learner needs and coordinate situations to assist students engaged in on-line learning subject to individual colleges TEL proposals.	IP	*	
• In co-operation with other credit granting post-secondary institutions offering technology enhanced learning options, serve as invigilators or test centers for learners who cannot travel to those institutions to write exams or demonstrate their knowledge and skills to obtain credit for their learning.	• Develop college system of exam invigilation with SIAST.	IP	*	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
7. The Review Committee recommends that the assessment of needs for university courses and programs also be included in the annual needs assessment process. Regional Colleges and the universities should collaborate to develop approaches and methods for identifying and prioritizing these needs, with the possibility of conducting in-depth assessments every few years.	• Review RC/university program agreement. (see Rec. 11)		*	
8. The Review Committee recommends that colleges clearly demonstrate linkages between the needs presented in their annual needs assessment reports and proposed programming in their business plans. It is also recommended that the methods and processes used by Regional Colleges to conduct their needs assessments be clearly outlined in their reports.	• Review needs assessment methods and processes with SLMN. • Develop and publish provincial annual needs assessment.		*	*
9. The Review Committee recommends that the current brokerage model and protocol agreement with SIAST be updated and revised to enhance delivery of technical education and training in rural and northern Saskatchewan. It is recommended that a new agreement: • Establish a formal process for SIAST and the Regional Colleges to coordinate and integrate their needs assessment processes and jointly plan how identified needs can be addressed. • Clarify points of contact and channels of communication for the Regional Colleges within SIAST's organizational structure. • Provide ways for colleges to have input into the design, evaluation and updating of curricula for programs that are brokered by colleges to address learning needs in their regions. • Identify appropriate and reasonable timelines for SIAST to respond to requests from Regional Colleges, to be determined mutually by SIAST and the colleges. • In addition to discussing their requirements with SIAST and giving SIAST an opportunity to respond before choosing an alternative provider, recognize that Regional Colleges may seek to broker programs from institutions other than SIAST. • Include avenues for SIAST and the Regional Colleges to work together in making the best use of technology enhanced learning and supporting learners at a distance. • Clarify institutions' responsibilities for students from a legal point of view, in terms of obligations for student support services, and for accountability and reporting purposes. • Encourage co-operation between the Regional Colleges and SIAST in providing student services at the local level; and • Continue to require SIAST and Regional Colleges to notify each other in identifying and responding to training needs in their respective service areas.	• Review and revise SIAST/RC protocol Partnership agreement. (now known as the Partnership Agreement.)		*	

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
11. With respect to university courses and programs, the Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges and the province's two universities collaborate in identifying and responding to needs in rural and northern Saskatchewan. It is further recommended that these needs be given priority in university plans for greater use of technology enhanced learning.	• Review current SL/University programming agreements. Considering a 3-way agreement with RCs/SL/Universities. The impact of TEL on course delivery costs to be included in the agreements. (see Rec. 7)		* *	Ongoing
	• Colleges to follow up report of Off-Campus University Programming Group.		*	Ongoing
	• Collaborate with SCN regarding programs and services.		*	Ongoing
	• Colleges participate on U of S Regional Advisory Council. (see Rec. 7)			
Noncredit Community Education and Training for Industry **13.** The Review Committee recommends that a role for Regional Colleges in providing noncredit community education programs and training for industry be explicitly recognized as appropriate and valuable and included within their mandate. These programs involve colleges in supporting communities to acquire knowledge and skills to plan and undertake economic and social development initiatives and in providing training to enable workers and employers to keep pace with skills needed on the job. In carrying out this mandate, Regional Colleges are encouraged to collaborate with partners in developing inter-institutional and inter-agency co-operation to identify community and industry learning needs, coordinate educational resources, reduce duplication of effort, and improve effectiveness in the delivery of educational services supporting economic and social development. When reporting the progress being made, it would be useful to cite specific examples on the part of each college.	• Incorporate community education programs and training for industry into SIS reporting structure.	IP	*	

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
15. In instances where a community need for personal interest or leisure programs can not be met by another agency, it is recommended that Regional Colleges have the ability to provide this type of programming on a full-cost recovery basis including both direct and indirect costs. It is also recommended that this activity be tracked using a category of programming separate from community education and training for industry.	• Incorporate definitions into Student Information Systems (SIS).	✓	*	
Regional Colleges and Agricultural Programming **17.** The Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges participate in processes to better coordinate efforts of the many agencies and institutions involved in training within the agricultural sector, serving farm families and other specialized workers, and addressing gaps in current responses at the regional and provincial levels. The Departments of PSEST and Agriculture and Food should take the lead in facilitating this process. It is further recommended that the Departments review training and related income support programs in terms of their fairness and responsiveness to the needs of people engaged in agriculture.	• College's are proposing an array of counselling services to the Farm Families Opportunities Initiative (FFOI), Older Workers Program and Enhanced Farm Families Program (Federal).	IP	IP	
International Development **19.** The Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges have an ability to become involved in international development projects, where colleges have another institutional partner and all direct and indirect costs associated with a project are fully recovered. (This stems from an ASRC submission)	• Review legislation and regulations to ensure that recommendation is incorporated into mandate. • Develop policy for colleges involvement in international development. • Establish process to define full cost recovery for international development projects. • Establish pricing policy for international development projects.	IP IP	* * * *	

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS				
Equity Policy **20.** The Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges adopt the Equity Policy Framework developed as part of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy and its guidelines for responding to diversity among learners and contributing to the development of a representative workforce in the province. As part of implementation of the Equity Policy Framework, it is further recommended that colleges give priority to implementing employment equity for their own workforces.	• College HR Group will continue to develop a framework for employment and education equity; SAO's will address education equity. • Colleges to support adoption of Aboriginal Education and Training Action Plan.	IP	• Ongoing	Ongoing
21. To facilitate implementation of the policy, it is recommended that Regional Colleges include an equity action plan as part of their business plans and report progress towards achieving results for equity group members, including First Nations and Métis people, people with disabilities, visible minorities and women. Equity plans and goals should reflect the distinct make-up of the populations served by individual Regional Colleges.	• Each RC to develop employment equity and education equity policies and strategies in accordance with Human Rights Commission (HRC) approval. Equity action plans are to be included in the RCs business plans.	IP One college has completed and HRC approved employment and education equity policy.	•	
23. The Review Committee recommends that PSEST and the provincial Office of Disability Issues ensure that the Regional Colleges are involved in the Disability Action Plan and implementation of the agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD).	• Determine responsibility for student support in credit programs.		•	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
24. The Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges collaborate with the Department's Career and Employment Services and community-based organizations to link education and training for people with disabilities with support for job finding, placement and retention in employment.	- Colleges will participate in discussions regarding the redesign of Social Services new CBO Policy Framework (New Department name is Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment).			*
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and Credit Transfer **26.** The Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges work with credit granting institutions or agencies, including SIAST, the universities and the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, to develop support services for learners who could benefit from PLAR and credit transfer at the institutions. The role of Regional Colleges would be to provide initial information and support to assist learners in applying for PLAR and credit transfer, and to continue to advocate for improvements in PLAR and credit transfer for the benefit of learners. The Review Committee also notes the potential for Regional Colleges to play a role in arranging for on-site assessment of learners' skills and knowledge for credit.	- Develop a discussion paper on the role of Regional Colleges in providing RPL Services in partnership with their post-secondary partners, followed by an implementation plan to integrate RPL services into existing college career and employment services. (see Rec. 27)		*	
27. The Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges cooperate with PSEST and other post-secondary institutions in developing a provincial vision and action plan for increasing prior learning assessment and recognition on a system-wide basis.	- Development & implementation of province-wide vision for RPL action plan.		*	*
THE REGIONAL COLLEGES WITHIN AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM				
39. The Review Committee recommends that Regional Colleges as a system consult regularly at the provincial level with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), the Dumont Technical Institute, and First Nations and Métis training and employment agencies to identify and implement partnership initiatives. At the regional level, it is recommended that individual colleges undertake similar consultation and partnership development initiatives with First Nations and Métis institutions and organizations.	- Colleges to review RC/DTI protocol agreement.			*

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS/ACTION	TIME LINE PLAN		
		Actual 2000-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT				
41. The Review Committee recommends that boards undertake regular self-evaluations of their progress in achieving the goals they have set for themselves and their colleges. It is further recommended that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training provide a model or guidelines which may be used by boards for carrying out this type of evaluation.	• Board chairs to evaluate current models and report status. • Review self-evaluation document and process, and compile best practices document as a "reference" tool.	IP	*	*
Boundaries **42.** The Review Committee recommends that the boundaries of regional college service areas be reviewed on a regular basis. Further, the Review Committee recommends that the Regional Colleges and PSEST work together to define an appropriate rationale for college boundaries, including factors such as labour market regions, areas of other service providers, travel time, population and viability to offer a range of programs and services.	• Document rationale for college originals/current boundaries. • Define process and timelines for regular review.			* *
45. The Review Committee recommends that efforts to develop performance indicators and information systems for reporting be given priority by the Regional Colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training.	• Develop and implement information system for reporting on performance measures.	IP	*	
Funding Issues **46** The Review Committee recommends that a new funding model for Regional Colleges be developed and implemented, as envisioned in the Saskatchewan Training Strategy, to enable greater flexibility on the part of colleges to direct resources to priorities and needs at the regional level. The Minister would continue to approve the annual business plans of Regional Colleges, which outline the particular configuration of programs to be offered in each college service area and the specific outcomes to be achieved.	• Develop funding approach for Regional Colleges • Propose consolidation of program administration funding with base grant. (see Rec. 47)	IP IP	IP IP	

Appendix 3

Evaluation Criteria Based on New Training Model

The New Training Model has been described in the main body of the report. It has been used to assess each aspect of the training system. The New Training Model is based on a high degree of integration of activities. It is based on seamlessness and concentrated effort on a multiplicity of outcomes all linked to one another. It is thus necessary to evaluate activities holistically.

In order to assist in such an evaluation the Panel developed and applied a number of questions and criteria which represent the important considerations in ensuring consistency of the New Training Model. These were applied to all institutions, organizations and programs in order to assess their consistency with and contribution to the system.

The following is a summary of the criteria and questions:

1. System Planning, Collaboration and Coordination

- Are effective planning and policy processes in place?
- Do planning and policy processes involve the appropriate range of participants?
- Do they have access to and ability to use data that is required?
- Are plans and policies effectively articulated and communicated?
- Are institutional processes and structures supportive of planning and policy development?
- Is planning responsive to government and Minister's needs?
- Is there effective coordination within the system?

2. Labour Market Responsiveness

- Are labour market needs effectively measured and evaluated?
- Is the rapidly changing labour market in the province understood and taken into account?
- Are the participants in labour market needs assessments appropriate?
- Are industry and occupational based planning processes relevant and effective?
- Is timely and necessary information available?
- Do employers have adequate access to the system?
- Do employers have their needs recognized and accounted for?
- Are the linkages with employment effective?
- Do local and regional labour market needs get served adequately?
- Do programs recognize industry and employment needs and demands?
- Are career services adequate?

3. Inclusiveness, Reducing Barriers, and Ensuring Respect

- Are individual learner differences recognized and valued?
- Is inclusiveness incorporated as a goal by each of the institutions, and are action plans in place to achieve inclusiveness?
- Are all of the equity groups included?
- Are action plans workable and effective?
- Is there an adequate understanding and consideration of barriers?
- Are barriers actually being identified and reduced?
- Are needed supports to reduce barriers given sufficient priority?
- Is performance being adequately measured?
- Is tolerance and understanding and accepting difference an institutional priority?

4. Participation of Aboriginal People

- Are First Nations and Métis people adequately recognized and provided for by needed programs and services?
- Is there a workable commitment to ensure that the supply of trained Aboriginal workers will be available to meet the needs of the economy for trained workers in the future?
- Is there an adequate provision for participation of Aboriginal people and organizations in planning and organizing the training system?
- Are jurisdictional barriers and conflicts impeding the ability of the system to ensure full participation by First Nations and Métis people?
- Are there effective action plans in place in the institutions, and are they workable and effective?
- Is there an adequate understanding and consideration of barriers and other factors that reduce the potential participation of First Nations and Métis people in training?
- Are barriers actually being identified and reduced, and needed supports put in place?
- Are incentives adequate and effective, including assurances of employment?
- Are SIIT and DTI being included as full partners and utilized to the fullest extent possible to increase the availability of trained people?
- Do provincial institutions have representative workforces?

5. Continuous and Life-long Learning

- Is continuous life-long learning understood and accepted by the various parts of the system?
- Are programs and services planned on the basis of life-long learning principles?
- Is training easily accessible on flexible terms to learners regardless of age, location and situation?

- Does the system still give preferential consideration to school completion candidates seeking fixed term, pre-employment certification?
- Are credentials being emphasized and used to the detriment of life-long learning principles?
- Does the training system encourage and support individuals in planning and accessing training on a flexible, continuous basis?
- Are continuing education experiences being recognized and rewarded?
- Are differences in individual circumstances assessed and accounted for in a supportive environment?
- Do those with literacy and basic skill needs get adequately recognized and served?
- Is Adult Basic Education meeting the needs of learners, and what can be done to increase its effectiveness?

6. Integration

- Are roles and responsibilities appropriately set out?
- Is there adequate knowledge and understanding of integration needs and priorities?
- Is there effective co-operation in planning and offering programs?
- Is there unnecessary overlap and duplication contributing to inefficiencies?
- Are there serious gaps in the system?
- Is there effective communication between all of the actors?
- Is there unnecessary conflict between actors?
- Does training recognize prior learning?
- Are services and programs linked and integrated across the system?
- Are employment and career services programs well integrated with training offered?
- Is the range of programs and services relatively complete given the needs and goals?

7. Institutional Effectiveness and Efficiency

- Are institutions effective in responding rapidly to changing demands and needs?
- Are they positioned to work cooperatively within the system to achieve maximum efficiency and value?
- Are they system oriented and responsive to mandates and policy direction?
- Are linkages with the training system as a whole adequate?
- Is there regulatory simplicity, clarity of mandates, and freedom to act within mandates and regulatory regime?
- Do programs meet required quality standards?
- Are they responsive to labour market needs?
- Are they learner centered?

- Are they implementing continuous learning best practices, including prior learning assessment and recognition?
- Are they addressing problems of accessibility and increased capacity?
- Do they have effective partnerships in place that take advantage of opportunities?
- Do they work effectively with industry?
- Are they innovative in program design and delivery, including in the use of technology?
- Are they recognized as being good at what they do?
- Are they organizationally effective in terms of meeting goals, planning effectively for the future, adjusting to changing demands, managing human resources, working with government, industry and labour, communicating with students, marketing, and cost effectiveness and financial management?

8. Capacity

- What will be the need for expanded training in the future?
- How will the need for additional people with technical and vocational training be met?
- What is the most efficient and effective way to expand capacity?
- How much of the capacity constraint is physical facilities?
- How much of the capacity constraint is attributable to shortages of specialized equipment?
- How much of the capacity constraint is attributable to a lack of financial support?
- How much of the capacity constraint is due to difficulties in getting qualified instructional staff?
- How much of the capacity constraint is due to inadequate use of technology?
- How much of the capacity constraint is due to inefficiencies in the use of existing assets?
- Where should additional capacity be added, and how?
- Who should and can contribute?

9. Flexibility

- Can the system respond readily to individual needs?
- Can the system respond to differences in community and regional needs?
- Is the system able to respond quickly to changing economic circumstances and need?
- Is training adaptable to the differing employer needs?
- Is the system able to respond to the variety of needs in a learner based, continuous learning culture?
- Are courses and instructional methods easily adaptable to differing regional and community situations?

- Are course and programs easily adaptable to small group or individual settings?

10. Decentralization

- Are rural needs being adequately provided for?
- Are northern needs being adequately provided for?
- Is further decentralization needed to support rural and northern economic development?
- Is further decentralization needed to increase participation in successful training?
- Is greater decentralization needed to ensure that sufficient trained people choose to live and work in rural communities?
- Will further decentralization be at the expense of standards and quality?
- Is further decentralization too costly?
- Is further decentralization impeded by the practices of the existing institutions?
- Are there rural and northern assets that could be effectively used to support decentralized training?

11. Coordination and Effective Partnerships

- Is there effective collaboration with government and industry?
- Is there effective regional and community collaboration?
- Are overlaps and complementarities used effectively to add value?
- Are partnerships seen as a means of increasing capacity, and are industry partnerships being fully utilized?
- Are economic planning and action plans based on such planning being supported through partnerships?
- Are aboriginal partnerships being fully utilized?
- Are there effective partnerships with community groups and non-government organizations?
- Are needed agreements in place to make partnerships effective?
- Are the opportunities to work in partnership with the federal government being fully realized?
- Are there opportunities to develop new relationships with the federal government to support training?

12. Effective Use of Technology

- Is technology being used to achieve more equitable access?
- Is it being used to support more effective learning?
- Is it being used to increase flexibility and extend the range of choices?
- Is it contributing to improved coherence in the system by improving integration?
- Is it being used to extend community and regional opportunities in the north and rural areas?

- Is it being used to enhance learning opportunities for First Nations and Métis people?
- Is it being used in such a way as to enhance the reputation and the attractiveness of the training system to students and faculty?
- Is it contributing to advancing the intellectual capabilities in information technologies, and in support of knowledge-based industries?

13. Financing

- Is increased financial support needed?
- How might it be provided?
- What role should be expected of the federal government?
- What should be the expected contribution of students?
- What should be the expected contribution of industry and employers?
- Is there need for changes in the way financing is provided?

14. Accountability

- Are there effective procedures for measuring, assessing and reporting performance?
- Are accountability needs of government being met?
- Are the accountability needs of students and the public being met?
- Are the accountability needs of key partners being met?

Appendix 4

Recommendations

1. The training system manage a minimum participation rate increase of 30% in training programs and Adult Basic Education (ABE) over the next five years (based on 2004-2005 rates), and that:

    - priority be placed on increased participation and graduation/completion of First Nations and Métis people;
    - increased participation of women in non-traditional programs and trades be supported; and,
    - the risks of reduced participation of young non-Aboriginal males, due to declining numbers in the population, be recognized.

2. Successful employment be emphasized as a required measure of success within the existing and additional training efforts.

3. The initiative of the provincial government to attract out of province workers to meet immediate skill shortages be continued, provided that a priority is placed on meeting future needs as much as possible from the provincial population.

4. The training system support and encourage development of positive and progressive workplaces by working in partnerships with communities and employers to:

    - implement employment practices and workplace changes to support representative workforces within government and among all major employers, in keeping with the representative workforce initiative and the work of the Provincial Aboriginal Representative Workforce Council;
    - develop and implement strategies to mobilize and retain needed new entrants to the workforce; and,
    - pursue new workplace models to strengthen the recruitment and retention of new workforce entrants.

5. SIAST, the Regional Colleges, SATCC and the department immediately implement strategies to significantly increase the number of Aboriginal faculty and staff.

6. **The New Training Model provides the fundamental framework for the next five years of development within the training system.**

7. **The overall provincial program/service framework which supports learners and employers to participate in training remain intact.**

8. **The institutional and agency architecture of the system generally remain intact, subject to some minor changes referenced in other parts of the report.**

9. **Saskatchewan Learning become proactive and create a sense of urgency and priority for training within the government and the province.**

10. **That Saskatchewan Learning place a priority on ensuring that the New Training Model takes primacy over other considerations and that the related matters raised in other parts of this report, including leadership and strategic development, lifelong learning and career development, literacy and essential skills, capacity, and responsiveness to labour market needs, be recognized as priorities.**

11. **Support for Adult Basic Education and Literacy be recognized as a priority and increased in order to increase participation in further training and entry into the workforce.**

12. **Support of Technology Enhanced Learning remain a priority of Saskatchewan Learning.**

13. **JobStart/Future Skills remain a priority and support be increased.**

14. **Saskatchewan Learning work in partnership with the unique First Nations and Métis institutions (Dumont Technical Institute/Gabriel Dumont Institute and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies), to provide leadership to mobilize increasing numbers of Aboriginal people to participate in training and employment.**

15. **Unique northern capacity issues be addressed.**

16. **System coordination, direction and leadership be given high priority over the next five years.**

17. **The concept of "horizontal management" be adopted by SIAST, Regional Colleges and SATCC to meet the concerns the Panel has recognized.**

18. A Saskatchewan Training System Planning and Coordinating Council be established by the Minister, in accordance with the principles outlined above, and that:

- **Membership and support be such as to ensure that the Council be functional, capable of playing a central coordinating and advisory role, and respected by the key players in the training system; and,**
- **The performance of the Council be reviewed, by a person appointed by the Minister, in the summer of 2008. The review should include a comparison of the Saskatchewan outcomes and impacts with those of the British Columbia model. Based on the findings of the review, the Council should be adapted or changed to ensure it has maximum effect.**

19. All institutions, policies and programs within the system make a priority commitment to full implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

20. Information and education be undertaken with employers to gain an understanding of and commitment to RPL.

21. The Regional Colleges have a minimum of one representative on the Campus Saskatchewan Board. This representative would have the same rights, privileges and opportunities as the other Board members.

22. The training system commit to increased use of technology enhanced learning as a critical strategy in meeting the challenges of the next five years.

23. Campus Saskatchewan be empowered to provide leadership and direction, through a separate division unrelated to the universities, to the training system and further that Saskatchewan Learning provide additional funding available for SIAST, Regional Colleges, and DTI on the basis of measurable and accountable commitments to increase the development of courses and programs based on TEL. Failure to meet the stated commitments will result in funding reductions.

24. Saskatchewan Learning consider a new funding model where innovation, including the introduction and use of TEL, is rewarded on the basis of increasing enrolments.

25. Saskatchewan Learning clarify and simplify roles and responsibilities for labour market planning and overall support to the training system.

26. The commitments made by Saskatchewan Learning in 2002 and the identified need to strengthen provincial planning processes to forecast occupational and skill requirements, identify emerging training demands, and create potential solutions to meet pressures, be reinforced as a priority to achieve:

- **increased integration and coherency of the labour market planning and information system for the training and post-secondary sector;**
- **improved quality of labour market information for more informed decision making regarding training; and,**
- **increased engagement with industry and business, and improved responsiveness to better meet the needs of learners, employers and communities.**

27. The strategy and action plan be overseen by the proposed Saskatchewan Training System Planning and Coordinating Council, and that consideration be given to developing a strategic partnership under the Council to manage strategic level labour market information activities.

28. The Saskatchewan government, actively negotiate a new relationship with the federal government that addresses the continuing issues and conflicts over off-loading and jurisdiction in the training system.

29. The Saskatchewan government enter into a new relationship with both First Nations and Métis people in order to ensure the training system provides support and encourages full and equal participation in training and employment of all people, including First Nations and Métis people and their institutions, without barriers or limits based on jurisdiction.

30. The training system, develop and implement an initiative to improve the status and understanding of technical and trades occupations in the general population and particularly in rural communities.

31. Saskatchewan Learning through implementation of the Career Development Action Plan support schools in their efforts to improve the image and understanding of the trades and other technical occupations as viable options for young people.

32. Work experience options for school students be increased to reduce school drop out rates through more direct linkages to employment.

33. The training system place a priority on developing and maintaining outreach activities to support young people who are making career choices.

34. The federal and provincial governments ensure sustainable, adequate, long-term federal and provincial funding is available for Aboriginal educational initiatives and a new level of policy priority ensure the rapidly growing Aboriginal population has the necessary access to skills education.

35. A greater number of First Nations and Métis people be provided ABE, literacy, and essential skills programming.

36. SIAST and the Regional Colleges be mandated to provide on-reserve programming in partnerships with First Nations and Tribal Councils.

37. A Partnership Agreement between SIAST and SIIT be developed to share resources, expertise and effort.

38. SIIT receive a share of provincial operating funds for training to support it in mobilizing First Nations youth and adults for the provincial workforce.

39. Funding for SIIT be on the basis of an agreement with Saskatchewan Learning with respect to programs and services offered and expected outcomes of the agreed-upon programs and services.

40. Aboriginal student supports, including childcare, transportation, and housing and career services, be increased with particular emphasis on rural and northern requirements.

41. All training institutions and the SATCC undertake self-audits with respect to breaking down the barriers to First Nations and Métis participation.

42. An expansion in Job Start/Future Skills partnerships with employers that focus on young people who leave school early and lack literacy and essential workplace skills.

43. That local community initiatives that help unemployed youth bridge to training and employment be supported.

44. The training system institute measures which support women in training programs through initiatives including flexible programming and accessible childcare.

45. Career services maintain a focus on higher rates of participation by women in training.

46. The level of training supports provided to people with disabilities be reviewed and amounts adjusted to cover the real costs of training supports.

47. The Department of Community Resources and Employment be provided a full seat at the table in all of the training system planning and coordination activities.

48. The training system recognize its critical role in meeting the needs of the long-term unemployed, the working poor, and those with little or no previous attachment to the labour force, and that:

- **particular attention be paid to the need for essential skills and literacy for this group (where learners are missing these skills and competencies);**
- **the Department of Learning consider a potential role for community-based organizations in program delivery for the long-term unemployed, the working poor and those with little or no previous attachment to the labour force; and**
- **the degree to which the needs of the above populations are being met by the training system be reviewed and program modification be implemented based on the results.**

49. The delivery of career and counselling services in the schools be improved to ensure that students are aware of and have actual experience with work.

50. The schools and the Regional Colleges make an immediate commitment to partnerships to provide career services to school-age young people and to encourage more informed career choices.

51. The importance of high school mathematics and sciences be emphasized with the schools and counselors.

52. The information and counselling that is provided emphasize the opportunities and benefits of pursuing technical training and work.

53. Work experience programs in the schools be encouraged based on initiatives now beginning in a number of schools.

54. Adherence to principles of the New Training Model be emphasized as the most effective way of achieving of a lifelong, inclusive system.

55. Partnerships be encouraged to enhance inclusiveness, as well as expand resources and improve the quality of learning.

56. Saskatchewan Learning develop the capacity and resources to provide guidance and assistance in developing effective partnerships, developing and negotiating agreements and making partnerships work.

57. The need in some rural and northern locations for facilities upgrading be recognized, and that private sector shops and plants be used to support the classroom component of instruction wherever possible.

58. A mobile trades facility to support decentralized offerings of trades courses, like the one recently deployed by The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, be a priority investment of the training system.

59. The need for expanded facilities at the Kelsey Campus of SIAST be addressed.

60. The need for facilities and equipment renewal at the Palliser Campus be recognized.

61. Training over the next five years, known as CareerStart Plus, be increased by 30% over the 2004/05 levels (2005/06 CareerStart commitments be included as part of the proposed expansion).

62. The federal and provincial governments pursue a new relationship based on joint goals, performance objectives, and accountability measures, related to the financing of skills training.

63. The federal government be invited to establish a new Skills Foundation in Saskatchewan which would be endowed by the federal government and supported by the provincial government:

    - Any savings accruing to the province as a net result of this foundation (assuming additional training expenditures), would be rededicated to increased training support by the province (including equitable support for SIIT and reserve based programming by the Regional Colleges and SIAST - where it would not compete with SIIT).

64. Saskatchewan Learning enter into Accords with all of the institutions, setting out expectations regarding participation, expected effort, measures of success, and accountability mechanisms.

65. Training be funded on a results based system.

66. Annually senior Saskatchewan Learning officials meet with the Boards and senior management of each public training system institution and organization to review expectations based on a system-wide Strategic Plan and Expectations Report.

67. Each year Saskatchewan Learning and each training system institution or organization enter into an annual Performance Contract, accompanied by an annual Policy Directive, setting out the policy direction governing it, including the outcomes and expectations and the accountability for implementing policy effectively and efficiently.

68. Consistent and comprehensive system-wide public reporting on the training system outcomes and impacts be implemented.

69. New IT system development be reviewed and efforts made to ensure compatibility with existing training system systems.

70. Initiation of a training system research agenda and collaborative research teams with potential membership from all types of training programs, including Aboriginal institutions/organizations and private vocational schools, be encouraged to investigate issues of common concern.

71. Efficiency and effectiveness audits be made a standard part of the five year reviews of the training system organizations and institutions in the future, and provided to the review committee to assist it in its work.

72. Support to businesses that provide on-the-job training be expanded, including: access to training materials, access to training experts, access to distance delivery options, and access to orientations for businesses (e.g., mentoring practices, student evaluation techniques, etc.).
73. Timely, user-friendly programs for on-the-job delivery - complete with reference materials and other resources compatible to workplace

instruction be accessible to employers and trainees at times convenient to the workplace and to individual learners (i.e., asynchronous not synchronous delivery).

74. The SATCC and the Minister of Learning appoint a team to develop a plan to address the delivery model for the apprenticeship program and that the resulting plan include:

- **strategies to significantly increase the numbers of trades people with journeyperson status to meet labour market needs;**
- **improvements to ensure the needs of rural and northern Saskatchewan are met;**
- **measures to assure high quality in the work-based portion of the program;**
- **strategies to facilitate adequate employer participation to sustain the program;**
- **the principles of decentralization and flexibility as a central component of the formal learning portion of the program;**
- **strategies to increase the successful participation and completion of First Nations and Métis people;**
- **measures to address the gender imbalance within the trades; and**
- **an evaluation framework to determine the impact of the plan.**
- **The development team should include members of the senior management of the SATCC, industry, senior management of Saskatchewan Learning, and knowledgeable outside experts. The plan should be implemented by September 2006.**

75. That alternative program strategies to increase the production of journeypersons and to support industry throughout the apprenticeship system be pursued, including:

- **development of new, alternative quality control mechanisms which enable those workplaces where highly skilled and experienced non-journeypersons are employed to apprentice entry level employees;**
- **increasing the maximum number of apprentices per journeyperson for all trades;**
- **taking action to ensure training related environments and trades do not tolerate racism and action to ensure students and apprentices have mechanisms to resolve issues related to racism;**
- **delivering Level I apprenticeship theory training prior to employment for all trades, re-enforcing this training through practical application in the workplace and offering these courses in urban, rural and northern communities;**

- ensuring delivery of Apprenticeship training is based on a local needs assessment;
- expanding the SATCC Training Protocol Agreement (or developing a new protocol) to include program development and delivery by Regional Colleges and by Aboriginal training institutions, as well as the purchase of out-of-province programs;
- expanding the number of trades programs to meet emerging needs particularly in the oil and gas sector;
- developing programs to "fast track" and recognize apprentices who demonstrate required skills in shorter (than currently identified requirements) time frames;
- providing funding for projects which are aimed at increasing the number of journeypersons, use Aboriginal faculty, and require follow-up evaluation to substantiate outcomes and impacts; and,
- providing a place for the SATCC on the Campus Saskatchewan Board so that it can access funding to facilitate development/purchase of on-line programs.

76. Local pre-established/accredited workplaces and staff be set up through on-the-job training partnerships to provide practical learning opportunities, particularly in rural and northern areas where there are inadequate lab facilities, where programs are not offered on an ongoing basis, or where the equipment changes rapidly be expanded.

77. Mobile laboratories and shops, in conjunction with local business, be developed to offer technical training for select high demand programs in changing localities.

78. Co-operative education, internships and other work-based components of programs in all parts the training system be expanded (as appropriate).

79. Expanded work experience initiatives in K-12 schools be encouraged.

80. Regional Colleges make the support of regional economic development a priority.

81. Government, particularly those departments with mandates related to regional economic development, support maximum involvement of the regional college in all phases of planning and implementation of rural strategies.

82. Industry credit programs, acknowledged and fully recognized in the application of PLAR, be recognized as a priority programming area for the Regional Colleges and DTI.

83. Partnerships and consortiums be encouraged among Regional Colleges and industry groups to more effectively provide industry training.

84. Virtual institutes within the Regional Colleges, in association with industry partners, be encouraged as a means of profiling, marketing and concentrating effort on specific sectors.

85. The system of regulation that has prevailed under the brokerage system be fundamentally altered to one of self-regulation, with a recognition of the Regional Colleges and DTI as equal partners in the public training system, including:

    - courses and programs offered by Regional Colleges and DTI according to the quality standards set down by SIAST be recognized for credit by SIAST;
    - disputes between Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIAST related to program and/or delivery quality or process be subject to mediation by the Council proposed in Chapter 6;
    - Regional Colleges and DTI be entrusted to make adaptations to SIAST curricula, in response to learner and local needs, based on professional judgments made by them; and,
    - SIAST's monitoring of SIAST-credit courses and programs offered by the Regional Colleges and DTI be discontinued and replaced by a self-monitoring process.

86. SIAST curricula be available to all public training institutions (Regional Colleges and DTI) at no charge and that a reciprocal agreement for sharing of curricula be discussed with SIIT.

87. Leadership be provided by Saskatchewan Learning to support pilot projects and innovative plans which further develop and operationalize the concepts in the NTM.

88. A Task Group be established to develop a model for sector and small community-based Virtual Community Skills Centers (VCSCs) to support increased access and participation to training programs, support for economic development, and further decentralization. This model would include:

- **designation of the Regional Colleges as the primary agents for implementation and support to the VCSCs; and,**

- **terms of reference outlining the VCSC's role and mandate in supporting regional economic development and associated training needs.**

89. High priority be placed on policies to maximize integration between schools/school divisions and training institutions/organizations in rural Saskatchewan in order to:

- **achieve better knowledge and information for school students about high skill technical occupations;**
- **improve career counselling for students;**
- **expand student participation in work experience and apprenticeship activities while they are in school;**
- **improve high school preparation for training; and,**
- **improve high school completion rates.**

90. Saskatchewan Learning form a Task Group, with representation from the new school divisions and the Regional Colleges, mandated to:

- **examine the potential for improved co-operation and coordination between the Regional Colleges and the new rural school divisions; and,**
- **take maximum advantage of the potential for more cost effective programming made possible through partnerships with the new larger rural school divisions.**

91. The training system and Regional Colleges in particular play an active role in delivering CASS and industry supported training in agriculture.

92. The proposed Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Agriculture Training and Education (SACATE) be formed, with the support of the training system.

93. The ACRE findings related to rural and agricultural training be supported by the training system.

94. The Green Certificate program offered through the Department of Agriculture and Food receive increased recognition and support.

95. The unique barriers faced by northern learners be given special consideration to support a rapid increase in training and employment bridging in the North. Assistance should be available to Northlands College, DTI, and SIIT based on their ability to increase training and bridging to employment.

96. The SIAST Board be mandated to focus on institutional management, with members appointed on the basis of their contribution to effective and efficient management oversight.

97. That SIAST no longer be the sole provider of "for credit" training in the province, and that the Regional Colleges and DTI be mandated to offer "for credit" training courses and programs, including the following:

- **SIAST's proprietary interest in its curricula and course materials for such programs be modified to place them in the public domain with respect to the Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIIT;**
- **SIAST no longer retain supervisory authority over the courses offered by the Regional Colleges and DTI;**
- **The Regional Colleges and DTI be obligated to provide instruction for course offerings in such a way that students are assured credits will be transferable to SIAST programs; and**
- **a special committee of the PLAR initiative be empowered to adjudicate and resolve disputes about course recognition between SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and DTI.**

98. That Saskatchewan Learning encourage SIAST to develop programs, courses and the related teaching material to be shared with the Regional Colleges, DTI, and SIIT.

99. A new Industry Liaison and Coordination Office (ILCO) be established as a "one stop shop" as a place of contact and assistance for employers in need of either new or significantly increased training support from the public training system.

100. The mandate of the ILCO will be to address requests for support and to refer such requests to the appropriate partner/partners within the system.

- **That the ILCO will be managed and directed by a small committee representing SIAST and the Regional Colleges, with one or two additional representatives able to speak for business and industry; and,**

- **That the ILCO be financed by contributions from SIAST and Regional Colleges through a levy proportionate to annual overall expenditures.**

101. Diploma program enrolments be expanded consistent with learner demand and the demands of the labour market.

102. Capacity at SIAST be increased in proportion to participation by learners and employability of learners in certificate programs (recognizing Regional Colleges and DTI will be expected to become more active in offering certificate courses and programs); and expanded diploma programs.

103. Support for technology enhanced learning be maintained and the level of support increased if the use of TEL increases.

104. Saskatchewan Learning and Treasury Board recognize that somewhat larger commitments will be required in the future than in the past to meet the expanding needs for training facilities at the SIAST campuses, but expenditures be based on clearly demonstrated need and use.

105. The implementation of supportive remedies for employer concerns, where appropriate, be considered from a system-wide perspective as well as a SIAST perspective.

106. SIAST report the findings of the survey to other appropriate institutions and organizations (e.g., schools).

107. SIAST be commended for its undertaking to understand and respond to employer views and interests.

108. SIAST prepare a strategy to eliminate wait lists for all programs for which there is short-term (two years or less) employment demand for graduates and that the strategy be submitted to the Minister for approval.

109. SIAST, the Regional Colleges, and DTI develop a system to regularly share waitlists (adhering to recognized privacy guidelines) when similar programs are offered by more than one training institution, and to approach SIIT to determine its interest in participating in this sharing process.

110. **SIAST seriously reconsider its First Qualified, First Admitted policy considering both the negative and positive impacts this policy has had on student admission and retention.**

111. **SIAST continue a leadership role in PLAR and TEL.**

112. The next TSR Panel should have representatives from business and industry as well as Aboriginal representation.

Recommend the Minister take this under advisement when setting up the next review panel.

113. Representation on the SIAST Board should be increased, with a significantly higher proportion of members being Aboriginal and two Fransaskois administrators.

Recommend the Minister initiate action to expand the diversity of the SIAST Board, but that the total number of Board members decrease to a maximum of 10 members.

114. That French-language college education in Saskatchewan be undertaken through an affiliation between SIAST and the Corporation du College Mathieu. ***Recommend that this affiliation proceed.***

115. Encourage phased-in retirement or move retirement to 70 years of age.

Recommend the SIAST Board, SATCC Board, the boards of the Regional Colleges, and government review staff/faculty retention and succession planning policies giving consideration to the benefits and detractors of this concept.

116. Strengthen the links between the training system and custody facilities.

Recommend the training system implement a plan to strengthen these linkages (including skills training, literacy and ABE).

117. The need for the following new programs was identified:

- mining engineering courses
- WHMIS as an orientation course
- nuclear medicine
- radiation therapy training
- rig technician program
- funeral director

- dental technology program (by classroom, distance or internet)

Recommend the system's training needs assessments further investigate demand for these new programs with a view to potentially develop them in the short to medium term.

118. Partner with Saskatchewan Labour (as a resource) in the development of new programs.

Recommend the training system providers include Saskatchewan Labour as appropriate in the development of new programming.

119. Literacy

- More flexibility and a learner-centered approach to literacy training.
- Pay literacy instructors and don't depend on volunteers.

Recommend the suggestions listed above be referred to the Literacy Commission for consideration.

120. Nursing/Psychiatric Nursing/Practical Nursing

- Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) should move out of SIAST and be delivered in its entirety by the university.
- Psychiatric Nursing - Within the NEPS program Registered Psychiatric Nursing (RPN) credentials should be accepted for faculty postings relevant to RPN experience; a Psychiatric Nursing Diploma program that would include courses toward a BA in Psychiatric Nursing should be developed; Psychiatric Nursing should be revitalized.
- Recruit male and visible minority groups for the nursing faculties.
- Provide a program to ladder Licensed Practical Nurses into Psychiatric Nursing.
- Establish a training facility in the Athabasca region to train nurses

Recommend a review of the NEPS program delivery model be undertaken and that the all the concerns and suggestions listed above be included in that review.

121. SATCC

- New trade designations: designate rig technician, pipeline operator, natural gas compression technologist, gas utility operator as recognized trades and develop programs to support them.

Recommend SATCC strongly consider designation of these trades.

- Increase provincial funding to the Northern Institute Training Program (a forestry specific training program for First Nations and Aboriginal people).

Recommend this concept be referred to the Steering Committee currently conducting a review of the Forestry Sector Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Forestry Training Subcommittee of the Northern Labour Market Committee.

- Allow more than one vendor to provide crane training.

Recommend SATCC consider implementation of this.

Appendix 5

RESOURCES

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Appendix 6

List of Presenters

Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee
Action Committee on the Rural Economy
Action Humboldt
Action South West
Action Swift Current
Action Watson
Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan
Agriculture and Food
Agriculture in the Classroom
Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission
Assemblee Communautaire Fransaskoise
Assiniboia Composite High School
Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan
Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges
Balcarres Community School
Banks, Brian- Regina
Battlefords Chamber of Commerce
Battlefords Regional Economic Development Authority
Battlefords Tribal Council
BCU Financial
Biggar Regional Economic Development Authority
Border Regional Economic Development Authority
Bourgault Industries Ltd.
Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation
Cameco Corporation
Campus Saskatchewan
Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science
CanSask Career Centre
Carleton Trail Regional College
Carleton Trail Regional Economic Development Authority
Casino Regina and Moose Jaw
Centre 48
Chamber of Commerce Youth Education and Training Committee
City of Estevan
City of Melfort
City of North Battleford
City of Swift Current
City of Weyburn
City of Yorkton
Clearing the Path
Cogent Business Consulting
College Mathieu
Commission on Improving Work Opportunities for Saskatchewan Residents
Community Resources and Employment
Conexus Credit Union
Cornerstone Credit Union
Corrections and Public Safety
Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan
Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Cumberland Regional College
Cypress Health Region
Cypress Hills Regional College
Cypress Hills Regional Economic Development Authority
Davidson Business Association

Dental Technicians Association of Saskatchewan
Doepker Industries Ltd.
Dumont Technical Institute
East Central Development Corporation
Entrepreneurs 2000 Regional Economic Development Authority Inc.
Estevan Chamber of Commerce
Federated Co-operatives Ltd.
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
First Nations Agricultural Council of Saskatchewan Inc.
First Nations and Métis Relations
First Nations University of Canada
FSIN Post Secondary Counsellors
Funeral and Cremation Services Council of Saskatchewan
Good Spirit Regional Economic Development Authority
Help International
Humboldt & District Chamber of Commerce
Indian & Northern Affairs Canada
Industry and Resources
Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan
Last Mountain Valley Business Association
Maple Creek School Division
Maple Leaf Consumer Foods
Meadow Lake Chamber of Commerce
Meadow Lake School Division
Melfort & District Chamber of Commerce
Melville Joint Board of Education
Meridian Community Futures Development Corporation
Métis Employment & Training of Saskatchewan Inc.
Métis Nation of Saskatchewan
Meyers Norris Penny LLP
Mid Sask Regional Economic Development Authority
Midwest Regional Economic Development Authority
Mitchell's Gourmet Foods Inc.
Mosaic Potash
New North
North East School Division
North West Regional College
North West Regional Economic Development Authority
Northeast Regional Intersectoral Committee
Northern Affairs
Northern Labour Market Committee
Northlands College
Parkland Regional College
Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada
PIMA – Saskatchewan Safety Program
Points West Management Consultants
Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute
Prairie West Regional College
Prince Albert Grand Council
Professional Institute of Massage Therapy
Provincial Aboriginal Representative Workforce Council
Provincial Youth Advisory Committee
Ravens Cross Energy
Redvers Coop
Regency College
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region
Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan
Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association of Saskatchewan
Sagehill Development Corporation
Sask Environment
Sask Health
Sask Labour
Sask Labour- Occupational Health & Safety
Sask Learning
Sask Pork
Saskatchewan Abilities Council

Saskatchewan Agrivision Corporation Inc.
Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
Saskatchewan Association of Automotive Repairers
Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations
Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses
Saskatchewan Association of Medical Radiation Technologists
Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
Saskatchewan Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists
Saskatchewan Automobile Dealers' Association
Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association
Saskatchewan Communications Network
Saskatchewan Construction Association
Saskatchewan Dental Assistants' Association
Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association
Saskatchewan Dietetic Association
Saskatchewan Federal Council
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission
Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation
Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union
Saskatchewan Government Correspondence School
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Saskatchewan Guidance & Counselling Association
Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority
Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies
Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists
Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
Saskatchewan Labour force Development Board
Saskatchewan Land Surveyors
Saskatchewan Literacy Network
Saskatchewan Property Management
Saskatchewan Public Service Commission
Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association
Saskatchewan School Boards' Association
Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists
Saskatchewan Stockgrowers Association
Saskatchewan Teachers Federation
Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council
Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc.
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses
Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
Saskatchewan Valley School Division
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board
Saskatoon and District Industry Education Council
Saskatoon Business College
Saskatoon Health Region
SaskEnergy Inc.
SaskPower
SaskTel
Sask Trends Monitor
SIAST Students' Association
Society of Involvement for Good Neighbours
Southeast Regional College
Southland Co-op
St. Elizabeth's Hospital

St. Peter's College
Stomp Pork Farm Ltd.
Sunrise Health Region
Swift Current Chamber of Commerce
Tisdale's Sales & Service
Town of Davidson
Town of Gravelbourg
Town of Maple Creek
Town of Melfort
Town of Nipawin
Town of Shaunavon
Town of Tisdale
Trailtech
University of Regina
VCom Inc.
West Central Regional Economic
Development Authority Inc.
Weyerhaeuser Saskatchewan Inc.
Wheatland Machine Shop
White, Warren- Regina
Work Preparation Centre
Workers Compensation Board
Yorkton Chamber of Commerce
Yorkton Tribal Council
Zelensky Brothers Saw Mill

Appendix 7

Acronym List

A

ABE - Adult Basic Education
ACRE – Action Committee on the Rural Economy
AEDP – Aboriginal Employment Development Program
AHRDA – Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement
ASRC – Association of Saskatchewan Regional College

B

BSE – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

C

CASS – Canadian Agricultural Skills Services
CFIB – Canadian Federation of Independent Business
CIC – Crown Investments Corporation
CMA – Certified Management Accountant
CMEC – Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
CSCES – Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Service

D

DCRE – Department of Community Resources and Employment
DTI - Dumont Technical Institute

E

EI – Employment Insurance
ELN – E-Learning Network
ESIS – Enhanced Student Information System

F

FFOI – Farm Families Opportunities Initiative
FLE – Full-Load Equivalency
FSIN – Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations

G

GDI - Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research Inc.
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GED – General Education Development

H

HRSDC – Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

I

ILCO – Industry Liaison and Coordination Office
ILP – Individual Learning Plan
INAC - Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada (Federal)
ITA – Industrial Training Authority

L

LMDA - Labour Market Development Agreement
LMI - Labour Market Information
LSSC – Learning Sector Steering Committee

M

METSI - Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc.

N

NAIT – Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

NEPS – Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan

NLCM – Northern Labour Market Committee

NTM – New Training Model

O

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

P

PITS – Petroleum Industry Training Service

PCP – Petroleum Competency Program

PCB – Petroleum Service Board

PLAR - Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

PTA - Provincial Training Allowance

Q

QS – Quick Skills

R

RNA – Regional Needs Assessment

RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning

S

SACATE – Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Agriculture Training and Education

SATCC – Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission

SaskCAT – Saskatchewan Council of Admissions and Transfer

SCN - Saskatchewan Communications Network; formerly called SCAN

SCPC - Saskatchewan Colleges Principals'

SIAST – Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

SIIT - Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies

SIS – Student Information System

SITAG - Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group

SLMN - Saskatchewan Labour Market Network

SLFDB – Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board

SLN - Saskatchewan Literacy Network

SPP – Sector Partnerships Program

SRC – SIAST Review Committee

SSEP – Saskatchewan Skills Extension Programs

STS – Saskatchewan Training Strategy

V

VCSC – Virtual Community Skills Centers